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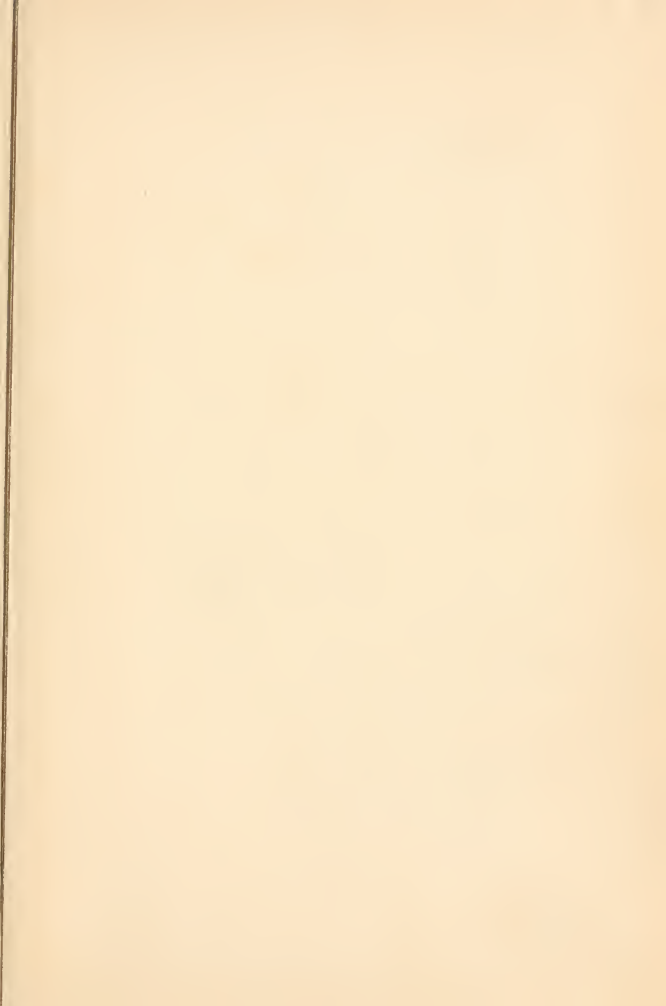
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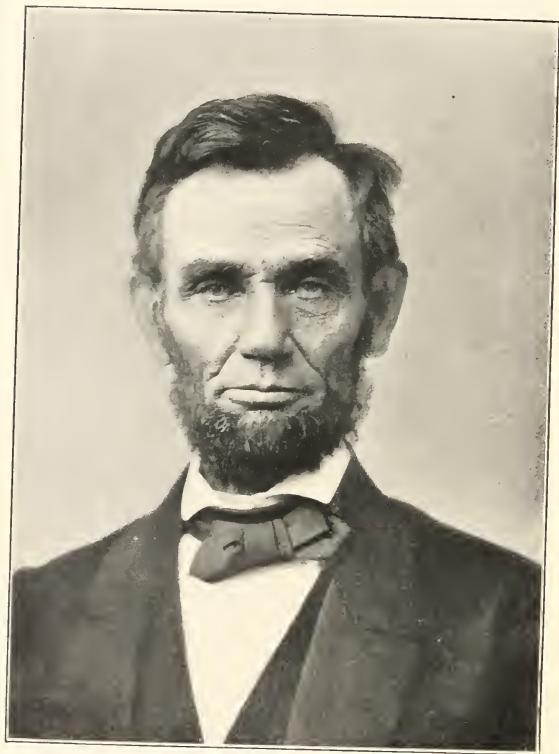
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ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN 1864

The Riverside Literature Series

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# THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

BY

CHARLES W. MOORES

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS  
INDIANAPOLIS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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## PREFACE

EVERY American, over eight years old, ought to know the story of Abraham Lincoln's life. More than this, every American ought to know the best of Lincoln's writings. Above all, every American ought to know the man, Abraham Lincoln. To give to children an understanding of his great life, an appreciation of the simplicity and purity of his literary style, and a love of the man, has been the purpose of this little book. The effort has been to do this without departing from the dignity which maturer minds demand in the presentation of a personality that has won the love of us all. At the same time, the picture were incomplete without a portrayal of the humor that saved Lincoln from the madness to which the burden he carried might have driven him.

The chapters which are not essentially political in their character, and therefore do not call for an elementary knowledge of American history, have been found suited to the use of children in the fifth and sixth grades; while, upon a thorough test, the whole book has proved well adapted for sight-reading in seventh and eighth grades. This test has shown the fulfillment of the author's purpose to give to the children a simple story of Lincoln's life, to stimulate a new interest in his writings, and to lead to a better understanding of Lincoln, the man.

"A blend of mirth and sadness, smiles and tears,  
A quaint knight-errant of the pioneers :  
A homely hero born of star and sod ;  
A Peasant Prince ; a Masterpiece of God."

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# THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

## CHAPTER I

### THE LINCOLNS SETTLE IN KENTUCKY

ON the eastern slope of the Allegheny Mountains, not far from the western border of Virginia, was the farm of Abraham Lincoln, grandfather of President Lincoln. This elder Lincoln was one of a family of Pennsylvania Quakers, who about the time George Washington was born had settled in Virginia. He had prospered and had become a man of influence. Doubtless because he was a Quaker he had not joined Washington's army, although he had a younger brother who was an officer in the Virginia troops.

The Revolutionary War had been going on for five years and was now nearing its close. Of the soldiers who had often felt the thrill that comes to those who hear the sound of fife and drum and bugle, many were beginning to hear the call of the frontier beyond the mountains, which Washington in his boyhood had explored. As their time of service expired, it was but natural that these hardy veterans should see in the unsettled lands to the westward a field rich in adventure and tempting in its rewards. From Virginia the line of travel to this land of promise lay southwesterly, along the eastern slope of the Alleghenies, up the Shenandoah Valley, directly past the Lincoln farm in

Rockingham County, to the Cumberland Gap, and thence into the blue-grass country of Kentucky.

As the endless caravan of canvas-covered wagons crept up the long, uneven slope on the Virginia side of the mountain range, hundreds of these venturesome pioneers passed the Lincoln farm, each company, no doubt, shouting to the less adventurous farmer, as they passed, a playful invitation to "sell out and come along." The elder Abraham Lincoln soon caught the spirit and joined the procession of emigrants that for the next fifty years was to take its winding course over the Wilderness Trail to the new West.

In 1780, Kentucky was a vast solitude, inhabited by wild beasts and a few scattered bands of Indians. Its trees and streams, its wild ravines and sweeping valleys, lay before the wondering eyes of the emigrants as they came down the western slope of the great mountain barrier, — a picture of indescribable beauty, a picture in which there were no signs of human life, no houses, or schools, or churches, or bridges, or roads, or fields of grain. It was a paradise just as God's hand had left it. And yet the struggle that was going on there between Daniel Boone and his comrades in adventure and the few thousand savages who claimed this paradise as their own, gave to Kentucky the romantic name of "the dark and bloody ground," and offered promise of excitement and adventure, as well as a free home, to all who might leave civilization behind them and brave the hardships of the Wilderness Trail.

Abraham Lincoln the elder was counted a rich man when he took the seventeen thousand dollars that he got for his Virginia farm and bought from the government his three plantations in Kentucky. He became the owner of seventeen hundred acres in three tracts,

located in the Green River Valley, and near where Covington and Louisville are now. To the Louisville region, then a pathless wilderness, he brought his wife and children, the youngest of them two years old. Here he thought to find the fortune that his pluck and enterprise would bring him. He was a friend of Daniel Boone, the Indian fighter, and his wife was a cousin of Boone. The Lincolns knew this land by its forbidding name, "the dark and bloody ground," but they were not afraid. The boys, no doubt, had their dreams of wild game, and of the scalping-knife and tomahawk, and they went into the unknown country full of faith in the fortune they were to win there. But the father's fortune was to die at the hands of the Indians, leaving his widow and five young children to make their way in the backwoods, with no one to care for them, with no chance for an education, and property from which they could not make their living. Whatever value their hundreds of acres had, depended on their being cleared and planted. The death of the father was the end of their great hopes, and to the Lincoln boys, who were scattered and put out to work wherever they might find a job, Kentucky was indeed a "dark and bloody ground." The lands, such as they were, went by law to the eldest son, Mordecai.

The youngest son, Thomas, now six years old, became "a wandering laboring boy," and did the roughest kind of farm-work for such pay as men cared to give him. There were no schools where he could be taught, and he never learned to read or write until his wife taught him to scratch the letters of his name. He was a famous wrestler, and he was strong and brave. He could tell a funny story, and, in his happy-go-lucky way, he won everybody's good will. In his memory he carried

a picture, that he never lost, of the morning in the Kentucky clearing when the Indian killed his father, and his big brother Mordecai, fourteen years old, ran to the cabin for the rifle and shot his father's murderer.

Thomas Lincoln learned the carpenter's trade, after a fashion, in the shop of Joseph Hanks. There he fell in love with his cousin, Nancy Hanks, whom he married — a tall, frail, but charming girl, with dark hair and dark, sparkling eyes. She was in many ways like her son. She read books when she could get them, particularly the Bible, and she remembered what she read. She saw the funny side of life and she always enjoyed a good story. Yet she was often melancholy. She had not strength enough for the hardships she had to bear, and her short life had little happiness in it.

The Lincolns began their housekeeping in a shed that afterward was used as a stable in an alley in the village of Elizabethtown. Here their little girl Nancy was born. "Tom" Lincoln was not a very good carpenter. In a community where the neighbors were as able as he to make the simple furniture and rude buildings they needed, it is not strange that he failed. He had followed no steady work since his father's death had thrown him upon the world, and while he was not discontented or idle, he was restless. So he gave up his trade and undertook farming. On Nolin's Creek, a dozen miles from where his friends and neighbors lived, and about sixty miles south of Louisville, he started to cut out the trees and build himself a house of logs. This was a one-room affair, with no door to keep out the cold and storm, and with no window to let in the light. There were open spaces between the logs that made its walls. The floor was the bare earth, pounded hard. In its one unfurnished room there was no picture except that of the

barren patches of grass and weeds that the family could see through the open doorway. They slept on a bed of skins on the floor, and in the winter they sat shivering about the fireplace while Tom told stories or Nancy read aloud. Here, on February 12, 1809, their second child, Abraham Lincoln, was born.

There are pictures of this log house on the Rock Spring Farm, near Nolin's Creek, but the house was torn down and the logs were used in other buildings long before the pictures were made. The American people have bought the farm and rebuilt the cabin out of some of the same logs, and mean to keep it always in memory of the great American who was born there a hundred years ago.

The Lincolns soon found that they could not make a living on the place. So they moved again and built themselves another log cabin near Knob Creek, where the children and the tired mother were made more comfortable. Little Nancy was now old enough to go to school. They sent her, with her four-year-old brother for company, to be taught for a few months by an Irish wanderer, Zachariah Riney. Of him and their next teacher, Caleb Hazel, nothing is known except that they had no regular school, that they knew very little beyond the A, B, C's, and that they found in the little Lincoln boy a mind that was eager to learn and a disposition to ask questions that must have interested them and taxed their patience greatly. We are told that in the evenings, while other children slept, Abe was bringing spicewood branches to make a blaze in the open fireplace so that his mother could read to him and help him puzzle out the letters by the firelight.

The boy Lincoln was beginning to get an education. What he did not learn from the two wandering teach-

ers and from his mother, he picked up by asking questions of every man that passed the house, and by listening to the preachers who rode horseback through the country and preached the gospel wherever they could find an audience by the wayside. The lad remembered all that he heard, and repeated to his mother and to the boys and girls of his acquaintance the substance, and often the very words, of the sermons of these traveling preachers. The preachers knew scarcely more than their hearers, but they rode over hundreds of miles giving comfort and help to those that needed it, and keeping the frontier in touch with the rest of the world. One of them, David Elkin, was a frequent guest at the house, and won the admiration of the little backwoodsman, Abraham Lincoln.

The Lincoln farm — if we may call it a farm, with its trees and heavy underbrush, its stumps and patches of rock — was barren enough, and the little family lived mainly on the wild animals that the father shot and the fish that they could catch in the creeks near by. One day Abraham, now about five years old, had been trying to make himself useful and was coming home proudly swinging a fish from his line. Near the house he met an old soldier and, as he stopped to ask his usual questions of the man, there flashed upon his memory a command his mother had once given him, that he must always be kind to the soldiers. Instantly he gave the man his fish and went home empty-handed, disappointed that he had no fish to show, yet happy that he had done a patriotic act.



## CHAPTER II

### MOVING TO INDIANA

AT the beginning of the nineteenth century, Kentucky was no longer a wilderness. Through Cumberland Gap and down the Ohio River, thousands of families had been moving in from the East. Already the emigrants from Virginia and Maryland had brought with them a multitude of slaves who were to cut down the forests and plow the virgin soil and furnish for the new State the foundation for a slave civilization and a landed aristocracy. From the beginning the people of Kentucky were set apart in two classes. One of these classes consisted of those who could afford to have slaves to do their hard labor, and who in this way found time for themselves and their children to learn reading and writing. As the country became cleared and settled, these slave-owners were able to keep abreast of the times by means of travel and education. And because they had time and money and book-learning, they became the governing class in the new State. The other class was made up of those who were too poor to own slaves. They spent their days, axe in hand, cutting down the trees and getting the ground ready for the plow, and their nights in the heavy sleep that comes to those who work to the limit of their strength. When they needed food, the rod and gun brought them plenty of fish and game. Their boys and girls had to share in the endless labor as soon as they were old enough to do anything. The time of a boy of seven was too valuable to permit of his spend-

ing much of it in school. These two great classes, the owners of slaves and the "poor whites," had little in common. Wherever there were slaves the poor whites had small chance to get ahead in the world.

Thomas Lincoln was too poor to be a slave-owner, and so long as he had to live in a community where slaves were doing without pay the only kind of work that he knew how to do, he had no reason to expect that he could get ahead. It is certain that slavery had something to do with his failures in Kentucky, and it was partly on account of slavery that he left Kentucky a few years later to settle in the free State of Indiana.

A hundred miles to the northward was a newer country where there were no slaves, where the want of an education was no disadvantage to a man, and where there were no class distinctions between the rich and the poor. This new State had chosen for its great seal the picture of a pioneer, axe in hand, clearing the forest, with a buffalo in the background making way for the advance of civilization. What made it peculiarly the poor man's land of promise was that it had just written into its new constitution a law that should make every immigrant sure that he could earn his daily bread without competing with slave labor. In that constitution there was a sentence that in years to come was to exert its influence upon Abraham Lincoln's public career. It read as follows: "As the holding any part of the human creation in slavery . . . can only originate in usurpation and tyranny, no alteration of this constitution shall ever take place so as to introduce slavery . . . in this State."

In the summer of 1816, the year that Indiana came into the Union, Tom Lincoln sold his possessions, and building himself a raft, put his little fortune on

board and floated with it down the Rolling Fork and the Salt River to the Ohio; and on down the Ohio to the mouth of Anderson's Creek on the Indiana side. Plunging fifteen miles into the forest, he found at Little Pigeon Creek the spot where he planned to build his new home. He walked back to the Kentucky cabin, and in the late fall brought his family across the country on the backs of two borrowed horses to the banks of the Ohio. Crossing the stream, he and his boy, Abe, began on the north shore to cut a road through the densely wooded forest of walnut and hickory toward their new home. In these woods the children saw many strange wild animals. Here was the home of the deer and the wild cat, the wolf and the bear. In the fallen leaves and undergrowth crept copperheads and rattlesnakes, while in the shadow of the trees they saw more birds than the little boy and girl could count. Stately, solitary cranes waded in the shallow water of the creek; overhead were flocks of screaming green and yellow paroquets; and in the more open places occasional wild turkeys were seen. No doubt the long ride on horseback across northern Kentucky, the first vision of the Ohio River as it swept between its scarlet and golden hillsides, and the first serious efforts with the pioneer's axe to open a way through which the horses could carry their goods to the new home, made impressions upon the memory of the little emigrant that he never wholly forgot.

Years afterward, in telling about this boyhood home, Lincoln described it as "a wild region with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods." Speaking of this seven-year-old boy who had just come into Indiana, he said: "He settled in an unbroken forest, and the clearing away of surplus wood was the great task

ahead. Abraham, though very young, was large of his age, and had an axe put into his hands at once; and from that time till within his twenty-third year he was almost constantly handling that most useful instrument."

It was indeed the beginning of civilization in that part of Indiana. The nearest neighbors were some miles away, but they lent a helping hand whenever it was needed. The Lincolns were utterly poor, but no poorer probably than the rest were. And all were rich in the spirit of neighborliness that made each newcomer welcome to the frontier community, and joined with him to build his cabin and protect his household from illness and want and danger of all kinds.

The prospect of beginning life again in the thick woods, in November, without any sort of shelter and with no white settlement near by, must have frightened the young mother. But she had a husband who never lost his courage and a boy and a girl whom she loved dearly; and loneliness was not a new experience to her. It was too late to build a real house to live in during their first winter, so they had to make out of saplings what was called a half-faced camp. Three of its four sides were of poles covered as well as possible with dead leaves and brush, and the fourth side was open to the weather, except as it was protected by the bonfire that burned day and night before the opening. They had no matches; so the fire must be watched and kept alive, or the woodsman must start another by a very slow process, with flint and steel. Indiana winters are sometimes bitter — that winter the temperature fell to eleven degrees below zero. Winds sweep fiercely along the Ohio valley and the snow drifts deep on the hillsides. We can picture the boy

and girl as they lay by night on the hard earth inside their half-faced camp, with their feet toward the blazing fire, and enjoyed the dreamless sleep that their tired little bodies had earned, while Tom Lincoln, the father, listened to the howl of the storm and, hearing the cry of the wolf somewhere in the darkness, knew that he must keep up the fire or harm would come.

Without near neighbors and without the ordinary comforts, the Lincolns found life a serious affair. There was no time for play and little chance for learning, as books were lacking, too. But there were trees to be cut down ; and there was underbrush to burn, a well to dig, a garden to get ready for the spring planting, and plans to make for the real log house that they would build as soon as winter was gone. When the weather kept them within the camp and close to the fireside, the father would frighten the boy and girl with his story of how the Indians had shot their grandfather, but he would keep up their courage by pretending that there were no Indians left in the Little Pigeon country ; and the children's mother would read to them out of her Bible the stories that the boy never forgot. So, because they had one another, they were happy and unafraid.

"At this place," Lincoln wrote of himself years later, "Abraham took an early start as a hunter which was never much improved afterward. A few days before the completion of his eighth year, in the absence of his father, a flock of wild turkeys approached the new log cabin, and Abraham with a rifle gun, standing inside, shot through a crack and killed one of them. He has never since pulled a trigger on any larger game."

There was no place where clothes could be bought for the children, nor was there any money to spend on them. Abe's cap was of coonskin, the tail hanging down

behind for beauty. His shoes — when he wore any — were moccasins fashioned by his mother's delicate hands out of deerskin, and his trousers were of deerskin, too. A shirt of home-made linsey-woolsey completed his outfit. Stockings he never wore until he was a grown man. Lincoln has described the slipperiness of the deerskin moccasins and trousers when he got wet ; and how, with all their stretching, the deerskin trousers never quite covered his long brown legs.

Food, except fish and game, was hard to find, and without flour or meal, and without a stove, it was hard to prepare. It is not strange that the hungry boy said in his quaint way, as his father asked a blessing on the dinner of baked potatoes, "Dad, I call these mighty poor blessings."

## CHAPTER III

### A BACKWOODS BOYHOOD

THE next year the Lincolns were able to put up a new log cabin. This was at least a safer place to live in than the half-faced camp. This cabin had neither window, nor door, nor floor. The children slept on a bed of leaves in the loft, which they reached by climbing a row of pegs driven into the wall. The bed downstairs was built by driving a forked stake into the earth, near the corner of the room, and laying a pole from this stake across to each of two walls. On these cross-poles were laid rough boards, which were made soft and comfortable by covering them with leaves and clothing and the skins of wild animals. Such other furniture as they had, Tom Lincoln made out of the forest timber with his simple woodsman's tools.

Here, for another year, the mother suffered from the exposure for which she was so little fitted and against which she was so ill-protected. Then came a dread disease which struck down people and cattle alike. From this plague, there being no physician within thirty miles to care for her, Nancy Lincoln died. Father and son cut down a tree and out of the green timber built a rough box for her burial. In the woods near by they made her a grave and laid her to rest.

Not long before this, cousins had come from Kentucky to live near them. Some of these cousins also died of the plague, and so there were other graves to dig, and strange boxes for the boy to help fashion. The children became familiar with the mystery of

death. Nancy and Abe were now eleven and nine years old, too young to know how to make the home comfortable, and too lonely to keep up the father's spirits. It seemed impossible for the disheartened man to give them proper clothing and food. The cabin continued doorless and windowless and forlorn.

Abe was a most affectionate child, and the idea of leaving the dead mother alone in those dreadful woods, with no religious service, and no prayer except the unexpressed cry from his own heart, was more than he could bear. In some way he had learned to write a fair hand. He painfully wrote out a letter and gave it to a traveler into Kentucky to be delivered, whenever he could be found, to the missionary preacher, David Elkin, who had been their friend years before. Many months afterward the good preacher found his way to the settlement on Little Pigeon Creek and preached the funeral sermon by the grave of Nancy Hanks Lincoln, paying to her memory the tribute of praise that the little boy had hungered to hear. To this service came women, on horseback, from neighboring settlements, carrying their children on the saddle-bow, while the men trudged beside them through the woods. And from that day these neighbors kept in their friendly sympathy the serious, odd-looking boy, understanding his sorrow and wondering what dreams there were in the depths of his mysterious eyes.

Things went from bad to worse, until it began to look as if the family would be scattered, as Thomas Lincoln and his brothers and sisters had been thirty years before. Then there came a change. The father realized what the home needed most, and went back alone to Kentucky. There he found Sarah Johnston, a young widow, whom he had always known, and per-



suaded her to marry him. The coming of this new mother to Little Pigeon Creek was a fortunate thing for the Lincoln children, for she loved them and cared for them as tenderly as their own mother would have done. Her three children, too, brought into Abe's life the cheer of companionship that he had needed, and saved him from much of the melancholy toward which he was always strongly inclined. She was considered rich in the little Hoosier settlement. It took four horses to haul the real furniture that she brought. There were beds and chairs, and there was a fifty-dollar walnut bureau, the first the children had ever seen. This bureau was an object of such splendor that Tom Lincoln pronounced it "little less than sinful to own such a thing."

Soon the cheerless cabin was made homelike. Into the open doorway Mrs. Lincoln had them fit a door of split timber. A window was cut through the logs and frames were set in. There was no glass in the frontier country, so they fastened sheets of greased paper across the window to let the light through. Boards were split with axe and wedge and laid on the earth for flooring. The open spaces between the logs in the walls were filled with clay. And so the cabin became a house. These were not the only changes. Between the boy and his new mother there sprang up an understanding that soon ripened into love. She believed in him and encouraged him in a way that his father never did, and she saw to it that the ambitious boy had new and better opportunities to learn, and that his father and others did not disturb him when he wanted to read. Because she found him unlike other children, she kept watch over him with special tenderness. Fifty years later, when he had grown to man-

hood and had given his life for his country, she recalled to a friend the boyhood that had been intrusted to her for guidance. "Abe was a poor boy," she said, "and I can say what scarcely one woman — a mother — can say in a thousand. Abe never gave me a cross word or look, and never refused to do anything I requested him. I never gave him a cross word in all my life. His mind and mine — what little I had — seemed to run together. He was here after he was elected President. He was the best boy I ever saw, or expect to see." And it was of her that he said in one of his rare bursts of confidence, "All that I am or hope to be I owe to my mother."

Neighbors have left many accounts of Abraham's boyhood. These all testify that "he saw hardships, had meagre clothing, coarse food, and no advantage of securing an education. All who knew him agreed that his ways were not like those of other boys, and he was not fully understood." One thing is sure from his own accounts of his boyhood, that, with all its hardships and its days of sadness, it was a very happy one.

It is hard to believe that, in the early days of the West, men and women had the same strange superstitions that the Puritans had in New England two hundred years earlier. It is true, however, that in the country where Abraham Lincoln lived as a boy, people believed that their lives and fortunes were influenced by visions, and ghosts, and witches. They believed, for instance, that potatoes planted "in the dark of the moon" would suffer blight; that fences built "in the light of the moon" were bound to fall; that a bird at the window foretold death; that the breath of a horse in a child's face would give it the whooping cough; that work could not be commenced with safety

on Friday. Women supposed to be witches were driven from the neighborhood. The men told their dreams to one another and were guided by them, as men were in the days of Pharaoh of old. From the influence of these superstitions Abraham Lincoln never wholly escaped, and in the experiences of his after-life we find evidence of his belief in the supernatural.

At Little Pigeon Creek the settlers had built a log church, much of the work on the windows, doors, and pulpit being the handiwork of Tom Lincoln and his boy, Abe. Here the younger Lincoln heard sermons from itinerant preachers, some of whom were ignorant and undignified, but all of whom were earnestly devoted to the welfare of their people. At this time a spirit of enmity toward slavery was beginning to be felt among the church folk in the Ohio valley. In many neighborhoods the people were helping negro slaves from over the river to escape to Canada and freedom, while the wandering preachers, who had seen some of the injustice of slavery farther south, denounced it from their pulpits and, in secret, helped to organize the anti-slavery movement in the border States. Mr. Lincoln and his wife were devout church members, and Abraham, although not yet interested in religious things, was regularly to be found at church, just as he was always to be found where men and women gathered, and where he could pick up something of value to add to his store of knowledge.

For a time, while his sister was serving their neighbors, the Crawfords, as cook and housemaid, he was their farm-boy, clearing up stumps, plowing, harvesting, or splitting rails, for twenty-five cents a day, and by night tending the baby and helping about the house. He served Mrs. Crawford the more willingly because

she was fond of him and had books to lend him. One of these books he took home to read in his bed in the loft in the early morning. He laid it between the logs in the wall, and a sudden rain in the night drenched it. Mr. Crawford refused to accept the book when he brought it back, and made the boy pull fodder for three days to pay for it. But at the end of three bitter days the boy owned his first book. In the weeks that followed, when he could throw himself down by the fireplace and read at night, he made the book doubly his own by hard study. It was on his way to the inauguration as President Lincoln that he recalled this experience in an address to the legislature of New Jersey: —

“May I be pardoned,” he said, “if, upon this occasion, I mention that away back in my childhood, the earliest days of my being able to read, I got hold of a small book, . . . ‘Weems’s Life of Washington.’ I remember all the accounts there given of the battle-fields and struggles for the liberties of the country, and none fixed themselves upon my imagination so deeply as the struggle here at Trenton. The crossing of the river—the contest with the Hessians—the great hardships endured at that time—all fixed themselves on my memory . . .; and you all know, for you have all been boys, how those early impressions last longer than any others. I recollect thinking then, boy even though I was, that there must have been something more than common that those men struggled for.”

## CHAPTER IV

### A STRANGE EDUCATION

NEITHER the work in the woods nor that at the carpenter's bench attracted the growing boy. His interest in books made the lonely and exacting labor with axe and hammer harder for him to bear than it was for most boys. He became more and more absorbed in his day-dreams, until his hard-headed employers thought him lazy and tried to discourage his studies. But what he could not learn from his books he was willing to get from men. When a neighbor came down the road, or an emigrant from some far country drove his ox-team past the farm, the boy was found leaning against the fence asking questions, until discovered by his father and driven back to his work.

In those days men were much given to talking politics, growing excited over the respective merits of Andrew Jackson and Henry Clay. In their gatherings, too, they discussed the debates between the Baptists and the Methodists, or the Campbellites and the Catholics, or they told strange tales about the life Robert Owen and his associates were leading in the New Harmony Community a few miles to the southwest, where all goods and lands were held in common, like those of a single family. It is no wonder that the boy had questions to ask, for the one thing that interested him most was what men were doing in the great world that lay beyond his vision.

The young farm-boy and carpenter came into contact with the world of men through two other employ-

ments,— as clerk, one winter, in the general store at Gentryville, near by, and as ferryman, for almost a year, near where Anderson's Creek empties into the Ohio. At the village store, men gathered in the evenings and on Saturday afternoons to read aloud from the weekly newspaper and to talk politics. Here they argued about slavery, and rejoiced that "Indiana had come in free," and that the Supreme Court had just decided that there could never be slaves in the new State.

At Anderson's Creek, where Abraham plied his trade as ferryman, the Ohio was every day carrying past him cargoes from the East and South, far away. To his boat-landing came strange and interesting travelers,— men of the world, some of them,— from New Orleans and St. Louis, or from Pittsburg and New York. Again, on board the river craft, the youth saw companies of slaves, chained together like convicts, bound for the slave market farther south, and the sight was a "continued torment" to him.

It was as ferryman that he earned his first dollar. He was eighteen years old. Two men asked him to row their trunks out to the passing steamer and each paid him half a dollar. He was bewildered by the sudden possession of so much money. "I could scarcely believe my eyes," he said afterward. "You may think it was a very little thing, but it was a most important incident in my life. I could scarcely believe that I, a poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day. I was a more hopeful and confident boy from that time." These glimpses of the great world filled him with an eager desire to try his own fortune on the river, and the next year he and a companion took a flatboat cargo for a Mr. Gentry to New Orleans.

As schools were rare and the need to labor pressing, Abraham Lincoln's whole school life covered less than a single year. Many of his teachers knew little more than their pupils. But some of them, though possessed of scanty book-learning, had what was better, a knowledge of the outside world and a public spirit that made them leaders of men.

A mile and a half from Little Pigeon Creek a school was taught for a year or two by one of these men of affairs, Azel W. Dorsey. It must have been because in winter time even the busiest of men had leisure that Azel Dorsey was willing to teach, for he was one of the most active public men in the county. He had been coroner, and at this time was county treasurer. It was in his cabin that the people met to make Rockport the county seat, and in his cabin the first courts were held. He was one of the men who gave money to build the first bridges and to establish the first free library. Mr. Dorsey's little schoolhouse had window-panes of greased paper and a floor of split log puncheon. Here the Lincoln boy, now ten years old, attended for a few months. Here he learned better how to use the few books that came into his possession. Here he met all the other children for miles around and engaged with them in reading-matches and spelling-contests; but, best of all, he learned from Azel Dorsey, the man of affairs, that no man has a right to be so busy with his own interests that he forgets his duty to his neighborhood and to the State.

Four years passed before he went to school again. This time the course of study added manners to the three standard subjects, reading, writing, and arithmetic. The teacher, Andrew Crawford, who afterward rose to the dignity of a justice of the peace in Spencer

County, stood at the door and sent the children outside one at a time to come in and be presented to the others after the fashion of polite society. We can picture to ourselves the awkward Lincoln boy, now six feet two inches in height, as he lifted his coonskin cap to pretty Kate Roby and tried to hide his blushes and his laughter in his effort to learn politeness. These lessons in manners, like all his other lessons, he remembered, until, in the greater world of Springfield and of Washington, people wondered how a man so ungainly and so poorly dressed seemed never to forget to be a gentleman.

To attend the next school, taught by a Mr. Swaney, Lincoln, now seventeen years old, walked back and forth nine miles each day. Because of the time it took to make the journey, he had to give it up after a few weeks and go to work. In these three schools he found a special interest in the reading-lessons, in the practice of declaiming "pieces" on Friday afternoons, and in writing compositions. One of his school-day writings was on "National Politics" and another was on "Cruelty to Animals." Through the interest of an admiring neighbor, a third essay, on "Temperance," was published in a newspaper. Reading intelligently, writing a clear hand, spelling fairly well, and making simple calculations with figures, — these, with a grotesque sort of training in etiquette, made up the boy's schooling. But it was not in the schools that he got his education. The fellowship of trees and streams and of the gentle wild things of the woods, the companionship of boys and men, the pages of the Bible and *Æsop's Fables* and the half-dozen other books that he devoured by the blaze of the fire, and the discipline of hard labor with axe and plow, — these were his teachers.





THE BOY LINCOLN READING BY THE LIGHT OF THE FIRE  
(After a painting by Eastman Johnson made in 1868)



In early days men traveled many miles to attend court, not because they had business there, but because the coming of the judge and lawyers from near and far brought into the life of the people something that was unusual and often dramatic. To the court house at Boonville, the nearest county seat, lawyers sometimes came from as far away as Louisville to try their cases, to settle for all time the questions of property rights, or to defend men charged with crime. Witnesses were examined, and speeches made. In spite of the prohibition of slavery in the constitution of Indiana, appeals were made to these courts to permit the holding of negro slaves in the State. To these meetings of the court the young man Lincoln walked through the woods fifteen miles, whenever he could manage to get away from his work. And here he fed his fancy and his ambition with thoughts of something greater in his own life than day labor. Here, too, he got a copy of the laws of Indiana from one of the lawyers, and found within its covers the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of Indiana. Here he read for the first time the protest of a free people against the wickedness of human slavery.

As he listened to the lawyers, as in school and out he labored over his compositions, and as he read the few books that he could borrow, one great need impressed itself more and more upon him. He must learn how to make perfectly plain to others the thoughts that men and books suggested to him. Often he would hear words whose meaning he could not understand and about which his father would not let him ask questions, or he would find in his books things that nobody could explain to him, and as he struggled to make these things clear to his own mind, he saw how

necessary it was to use the right words in order to make his thought plain to others. "I remember," he once said, "how, when a mere child, I used to get irritated when anybody talked to me in a way I could not understand. I do not think I ever got angry at anything else in my life; but that always disturbed my temper, and has ever since. I can remember going to my little bedroom, after hearing the neighbors talk of an evening with my father, and spending no small part of the night walking up and down and trying to make out what was the exact meaning of some of their, to me, dark sayings. I could not sleep, although I tried to, when I got on such a hunt for an idea, until I had caught it; and when I thought I had got it, I was not satisfied until I had repeated it over and over; until I had put it in language plain enough, as I thought, for any boy I knew to comprehend. This was a kind of passion with me, and it has stuck by me; for I am never easy now, when I am handling a thought, till I have bounded it north, and bounded it south, and bounded it east, and bounded it west."

## CHAPTER V

### THE LAND OF FULL-GROWN MEN

THE time had come for restless Thomas Lincoln to undertake another migration. The earnings of the Indiana farm, added to what money father and son could save from their wages, had not been enough in fourteen years to enable them, with their ways of doing business, to pay the price of two dollars an acre for which the father had bought the place. Thomas Lincoln had begun to hear stories of the richness of the Illinois prairie land. The tide of westward emigration was setting in once more, stronger than ever, and as usual Thomas Lincoln was drifting with the tide.

The three families of Lincoln, Hanks, and Johnston, with Abraham Lincoln as chief teamster, got their worldly goods together in February, 1830, and started their ox-cart caravan on its westward journey. The State toward which they were bent bore the Indian name, Illinois, which means "the land of full-grown men." Surely, here was a country in which the young Lincoln, now six feet and four inches tall, would find a place for himself. Abraham was twenty-one years old, and his own master. He laid in an outfit of notions, and as they traveled through the new country, sold them to the farmers and, by good bargaining, doubled his original capital of thirty dollars.

The roads were heavy with frost and mud. At the fords — for there were no bridges — the ice had to be broken to let the wheels pass. The first of the company to get into trouble was a small dog that at one

of these crossings was left behind and ran up and down the farther bank protesting piteously. "I could not endure the idea of abandoning even a dog," Lincoln said, "so I took off my shoes, waded across the stream, and triumphantly returned with the shivering animal under my arm. His frantic leaps of joy and gratitude amply repaid me for all the exposure I had undergone."

After helping the others establish themselves in their prairie home, Abraham Lincoln found his way to the village of New Salem, on the banks of the Sangamon. Here he entered the employ of Denton Offutt, by turns conducting his general store and flouring-mill, and finally undertaking for him a trading expedition to New Orleans. For this journey he built a flatboat and loaded it with bacon and farm produce, which he was to sell down the river. The venture was a financial success, and won for the young man Mr. Offutt's enthusiastic good will. Three years before, he had made a similar journey for Mr. Gentry, so that the Mississippi was not strange to him. The woodsman's habit of close observation now led him, unconsciously, to note the physical features of the country through which the great river was carrying him, so that his retentive memory enabled him thirty years later to follow the movements of the vessels of Farragut and Porter and the armies of General Grant as they closed in upon Vicksburg and permitted "the Father of Waters again to go unvexed to the sea." At New Orleans he attended the slave auction. Here he saw husbands and wives separated and children taken from their mothers and sold to strangers. The unspeakable cruelty of it all stirred the heart of the young man, who, as a boy, had been willing to fight his playmates to save a turtle from abuse, and who, as a man, had waded barefooted

through the ice rather than abandon even a little dog. When he returned to Illinois, it was with a deepened sense of the injustice of human slavery. The sight of men and women in chains was still a "continued torment" to him.

In his new home, as in Indiana, he was the strongest man in all the countryside. Wherever men gathered, his admiring employer, Mr. Offutt, was given to bragging of his clerk's strength, thus involving him in athletic contests. One of these rough-and-tumble affairs proved more important than Lincoln imagined. Jack Armstrong, the champion of the near-by settlement, Clary's Grove, had heard Mr. Offutt's boasts of young Lincoln's prowess until he could stand it no longer. He challenged Lincoln to a wrestling-match, which a touch of foul play converted into a fist-fight, and in which the champion of Clary's Grove bade fair to be defeated. Before he had finished, Lincoln had to whip the entire gang, one at a time, but he did it so thoroughly and with such good humor that he won their hearty friendship and kept it ever afterward.

In 1832, war with the Indians broke out in northern Illinois, and troops were called for to march against Black Hawk and his Indian braves. Lincoln, being out of a job, was among the first to enlist. Through the help of his new friends from Clary's Grove he was chosen captain. This was his first assurance that the thing he had always most desired, the good will of his fellow men, was his. The election to the captaincy was a success, as he declared long afterward, "which gave me more pleasure than any I have had since." By the time Captain Lincoln's company reached the front the war was over. The leisure time of this famous military campaign Lincoln spent in athletic sports,

running foot-races, and jumping and wrestling for the championship among the troops. The months out of doors, in daily touch with thousands of other soldiers, the close companionship, in camp and on the march, with so many young and active comrades in arms, strengthened in him the social spirit that was always a dominating characteristic, and encouraged him on his return to enter the campaign for the legislature.

He was now twenty-three years old, and he had but ten days in which to get over the district and make the campaign. He introduced himself to the voters in a way that won their respect: "I was born . . . in the most humble walks of life. I have no wealthy or popular relatives or friends to recommend me. . . . If the good people in their wisdom see fit to keep me in the background, I have been too familiar with disappointment to be very much chagrined." His first campaign speech was made at an out-of-door meeting, where he had to restore order by getting down from the platform and thrashing a disturber. This won him the full sympathy of the crowd. The speech that followed is simple and boyish: "Fellow citizens, I presume you know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by many friends to become a candidate for the legislature. My politics are short and sweet, like the old woman's dance. I am in favor of a national bank. I am in favor of the internal improvement system and a high protective tariff. These are my sentiments and political principles. If elected, I shall be thankful: if not, it will be all the same."

Lincoln lost the election, but in his own neighborhood of New Salem he received all but three votes out of over two hundred. The defeat, instead of discouraging him, only aroused his ambition. He realized that



he must keep on studying men, and that he must know as much as the men knew with whom he had to deal. He made friends with Mentor Graham, the village school-teacher, and being determined to learn how to make what he had to say perfectly clear to the most ignorant of his hearers, he borrowed an English grammar of Mr. Graham and began to study the science of language. From others he secured the works of Robert Burns and Shakespeare, which he read until he had many of the better passages by heart. His unlettered friends used to laugh at him as they watched him with one of these books in his hand, lying in the shade of a tree-trunk near the store where he worked, with his bare feet above his head, too absorbed to notice passers-by or to think of possible customers. From the poet of the common people, from Shakespeare, and from the Bible, which he kept always near at hand and studied and memorized in his hours of leisure, he was getting the mastery of straightforward speech and becoming familiar with the simple, vigorous words that men have always understood. Thus was he fitting himself to become one of the world's masters of English literary style.

With the grammar to study and the masterpieces of English literature for daily companionship, he had something now to occupy all his thoughts and take his mind away from his day-dreams. But how was he to make a living in the meanwhile? If he continued in the service of other men, his time would not be his own and his studies would suffer. When the opportunity came, not long afterward, to buy the New Salem store on credit, in partnership with a man named Berry, it offered him just what he most wished, — the possibility of making a living and pursuing his studies at

the same time. But the fortunes of New Salem soon began to decline, his partner went to the bad, and the store of Berry and Lincoln "winked out," leaving unpaid a mass of notes whose magnitude led Lincoln to call them "the national debt," but all of which he finally paid in full.

It was while he was trying to conduct this unfortunate business enterprise that a happy accident put into his hands his first law-book, and strengthened his determination to become a lawyer. As he tells it: "A man who was migrating to the west drove up with a wagon which contained his household plunder. He asked if I would buy an old barrel for which he had no room, and which he said contained nothing of special value. I did not want it, but to oblige him, I paid a half-dollar for it, put it away, and forgot all about it. Some time after, I came upon the barrel, and emptying it upon the floor, I found at the bottom of the rubbish a complete edition of Blackstone's Commentaries. I began to read those famous works and I had plenty of time, for during the long summer days, when the farmers were busy with their crops, my customers were few and far between. The more I read, the more intensely interested I became. Never in my life was my mind so absorbed. I read until I devoured them."

The failure of Berry and Lincoln brought the young student face to face once more with the problem of making a living without giving up his studies. Just at this crisis came an appointment as postmaster at the hands of President Jackson. For a few months he carried the mail in his high hat and read the newspapers that came into his keeping. Then came the first profitable employment he ever had. John Calhoun, the public surveyor, a Democratic official, needed an

assistant on whose honesty and intelligence he could rely. Although Lincoln was a Whig, Mr. Calhoun persuaded him to study surveying and take the place, assuring him that he might retain his political independence. Following unconsciously in the footsteps of George Washington, he soon mastered the science of surveying, and found himself for the first time earning more money than the bare needs of life required. As postmaster and as surveyor he was enlarging his acquaintance and winning the regard of men. Already he had become known as "honest Abe Lincoln."

During these years of struggle there came into his life a few months of great happiness. When he was twenty-three years of age, he met and loved Ann Rutledge, a fair-haired, delicate girl of nineteen, and in time he won her love. She had an air of gentleness and distinction and a mind of unusual clearness and power. As soon as he could become a lawyer and be able to provide a home, they were to marry. Suddenly a dreadful illness came and she died. The shock that followed her death plunged Lincoln into such melancholy that his friends were afraid he would lose his mind. He went often to the spot where, he declared, his heart was buried. One stormy night he cried out in his sorrow: "I cannot forget. The thought of the snow and the rain on her grave fills me with indescribable grief."

## CHAPTER VI

### LAWYER AND LAWMAKER

IN 1834, the young man of twenty-five, who had been common laborer, farm-hand, carpenter, ferryman, flat-boatman, peddler, grocer's clerk, soldier, unsuccessful merchant, postmaster, and surveyor, and, all the way along, dreamer and thinker and student, became for a second time a candidate for the legislature, and was successful.

His work as lawmaker satisfied the people, and he was elected again in 1836. The announcement of his candidacy for the legislature in 1836 contained one political principle which proved him a statesman rather than a politician. It was: "If elected, I shall consider the whole people of Sangamon my constituents, as well those that oppose as those that support me."

In the legislative session of 1837, he brought about the enactment of a law which removed the State capital from Vandalia to Springfield. This victory showed that, while other legislators were playing party politics, he had learned how to get things done.

Far more significant than this venture in practical politics was his position on the question of slavery, which he caused to be recorded in the legislative journals, and to which he succeeded in getting one other representative to sign his name. At this time the negro had few friends. Those who believed in ending human slavery at once and forever seemed not to understand that what they were proposing would not be possible in any lawful way, and their efforts at destroying that great

evil not only made them feared and hated, but put off the longer the reform for which they were laboring so earnestly and so unwisely. Lincoln saw this, and yet both his conscience and his heart rebelled against slavery as an institution which, though lawful and therefore not to be overthrown by violence, was yet a great moral wrong. His feeling in the matter was expressed in a protest containing the following words: "Resolutions upon the subject of domestic slavery having passed both branches of the General Assembly at its present session, the undersigned hereby protest against the passage of the same. They believe that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than abate its evils." It required courage to make this protest at a time when those who expressed views on slavery even as moderate as Lincoln's were unpopular.

Meanwhile, Lincoln had been diligently reading law, and in 1837 his great ambition was attained—he passed his examination for admission to the bar.

The removal of the State capital that same year to Springfield, chiefly through his own efforts, as we have seen, led Lincoln to believe that in Springfield he would succeed best in the practice of his new profession. Putting into his saddle-bags a little clothing and two or three law-books, he borrowed a horse and rode to the new capital. At the store of Joshua Speed, who was to become his intimate friend, he figured on the cost of furnishing a bedroom; but the price, seventeen dollars, was more than he had, so he asked for credit until Christmas, adding, "If my experiment here as a lawyer is a success, I will pay you then. If I fail in that, I will probably never pay you at all." He

looked so utterly gloomy that Speed offered to share quarters with him. Lincoln took the saddle-bags upstairs, laid them on the floor, and came down, this time beaming with smiles as he exclaimed, "Well, Speed, I'm moved."

At one end of Speed's store was a great fireplace about which the men of Springfield were wont to gather. Here the new lodger spent many spare hours arguing with the leaders of public opinion about the religious and political questions of the day. Here he met Stephen A. Douglas, then a rising young politician of opposite political faith, whose after-life, with its rivalries, and its bitternesses, and its final loyal friendship, was to be so strangely interwoven with his own. Here a debating tournament was arranged, in which all the leading speakers were to take part. It was held in the Presbyterian church, where they could have a suitable audience, and it was at this gathering that Lincoln and Douglas had their first serious public debate. Some of the younger men in this group organized the literary society of Springfield in which Lincoln was to become a leading spirit. Here, also, he became famous as a teller of stories.

The practice of law develops in the beginner an infinite patience. Its rewards come slowly. The young lawyer had many friends, for he had a genius for winning the good will of men. From the first his success was assured, if only he could be patient long enough. Those were days when law-books were few. The attorney who won his cases needed a clear head and an understanding of a few principles of law, but, more than this, he must be able to win verdicts from jurors, who almost always were men of scanty education and many prejudices. Lincoln was not yet learned in the

law, but he understood human nature. In time it came to be known that no lawyer gained more readily the confidence of a jury and none won more verdicts than "honest Abe Lincoln." The experiment, as he called it, was a success, and his place at the bar was established. Yet while he was winning verdicts he continued his studies. "The way to know the law," he said, "is very simple, though laborious and tedious. It is only to get books and read and study them carefully. Work, work, work, is the main thing."

The best way to build up a practice and so make the problem of a livelihood less serious seemed to lie in the pursuit of politics, for in politics he could gain a larger acquaintance, do favors for others, and so find clients. The lawyers of that day were nearly all politicians. Thus his interest in politics steadily increased, while his influence among his fellows was growing wider. In his campaigns he met all sorts and conditions of men, interested himself in their affairs, and discussed with them questions of government, — national and state, — displaying in his opinions much sound judgment. In the places of influence and power which he hoped some day to fill he expected opportunities for wider service to the community of which he was a part.

In 1838 and in 1840, he was again elected to the legislature. In each of these sessions, the Whig party proposed him for presiding officer of the House of Representatives of which he was a member. In 1840, he was their candidate for presidential elector, to vote for William Henry Harrison for President. The men of Illinois had learned by this time to trust his rugged honesty, for in politics, as in the wrestling-matches of years ago, he "played fair." To the well-

dressed and somewhat aristocratic society of Springfield Lincoln still presented the appearance of an overgrown, uncultivated, young countryman. He was young and poor, and he still realized how little he knew. But men no longer despised him for his youth or his ignorance, nor dared ridicule his poverty. Through the practice he had had long ago in his Indiana boyhood in making stump speeches and in public debate, as well as his later experiences in the Springfield debating society, and in his discussions in the tavern and at the country store, he had become a master of debate, and was abundantly able to take care of himself in a running discussion that called for a ready response to every interruption, whether looked for or not.

In Springfield a prominent citizen and legislator named Forquer had built himself a new house upon which he had set up a lightning-rod, the only one in that part of the world. This man had recently deserted the Whig party and become a Democrat, and his disloyalty to his former principles had just been rewarded by appointment to an office that brought him a good income, but cost him the respect of many of his former associates. Lincoln's friend, Speed, tells how, after one of Lincoln's campaign speeches, Forquer asked leave to be heard. He commenced by saying that the young man, Lincoln, would have to be "taken down," and that he was sorry the task had fallen to him. He went on to answer Lincoln's speech in a way that showed how much older and wiser he thought himself than the young upstart whose ambition it had become his duty to rebuke. Lincoln waited until Forquer had finished, but his flashing eye showed that he did not intend to accept such treatment meekly. He closed his reply to Forquer by saying: "The gentle-



man has seen fit to allude to my being a young man ; but he forgets that I am older in years than I am in the tricks and trades of politicians. I desire to live, and I desire place and distinction ; but I would rather die now, than, like the gentleman, live to see the day that I would change my politics for an office worth three thousand dollars a year, and then feel compelled to erect a lightning-rod to protect a guilty conscience from an offended God."

It was in one of these campaign speeches that Lincoln was interrupted by some one in the audience who, thinking to humiliate him by reminding the people of his poverty, called out in the midst of his speech : " Mr. Lincoln, is it true that you entered this State bare-footed, driving a yoke of oxen ? " After a pause, the speaker replied that he thought he could prove the fact by at least a dozen men in the crowd, any one of whom was more respectable than his questioner.

Hard as it was to be laughed at, it was not for Abraham Lincoln to become embittered by these unkind attacks, for through years of exposure to the real hardships of life, he had learned patience. As he once said : " I have endured a great deal of ridicule without much malice ; and I have received a great deal of kindness, not quite free from ridicule. I am used to it." But ridicule was not all that he had had to bear. He had endured suffering and sorrow ; and he had walked through the valley of the shadow of death. Yet through it all he had kept his faith in a destiny which sorrow could not mar.

## CHAPTER VII

### MARRIAGE AND CONGRESS

SPRINGFIELD, in 1840, was an ambitious country town of about twenty-five hundred inhabitants. There was some wealth and some "flourishing around in carriages," as Lincoln put it. Among those who had money the young lawyer would have had little reason to expect to be treated especially well, for he was "poor, without the means of hiding his poverty." Fortunately he had no false pride; he was not ashamed that he had nothing, nor did he boast of it in his speeches. The men of Springfield respected him for what he had accomplished. In society, although he was quiet and timid, he was a welcome guest, because he talked intelligently on the subjects that interested people, and his droll sayings were often repeated and laughed at. It seems odd that the rough flatboatman of ten years before should be put on the cotillion committee to manage the fashionable dances of the winter's season, but the fact was that he was liked by everybody, and in that society a man was not despised if he had real ability and was willing to help others and able to interest them.

In the social life of the little town a young Democratic politician, James Shields, afterward a United States Senator, and by President Lincoln's own appointment a general in the Union Army, was making himself disliked by his airs of superiority. Lincoln, whose spirit of fun was apt to get him into trouble, wrote for the Whig paper a letter which he signed

“Aunt Rebecca,” and in which he made sport of Shields. This letter Miss Mary Todd and another Springfield belle followed up with one or two more of the same sort. They made the people laugh at Shields, and they made Shields angry. To protect the young women, Lincoln let Shields believe that he was wholly to blame. Shields challenged Lincoln to fight a duel. Lincoln, being the challenged party, had the choice of weapons and chose broadswords. When we remember that Lincoln was a giant, six feet and four inches tall, and strong enough to lift a load of six hundred pounds, and that Shields was a little man with short arms and short legs, we can believe that in calling for broadswords Lincoln was really preventing a fight, for he knew that Shields’s sword could not touch him at any point, while he with his gigantic arms could disarm his opponent in a moment. It was his way of “laughing the case out of court.” The duel never took place. Lincoln had made Shields look very foolish, but he had gone far enough in the affair to be heartily ashamed of himself.

One lasting result of the Shields duel was that it brought Lincoln and Mary Todd together. Not long afterward they were married. Mrs. Lincoln was young and handsome and proud, and she was ambitious both for herself and for her husband. She had accepted attentions from Stephen A. Douglas, the most admired public man in Illinois, but she was saying already, what her friends thought very foolish, that she had preferred Lincoln because he would live to become President of the United States. They had four boys, only one of whom, Robert Todd Lincoln, lived to manhood. The boys were their father’s comrades, and brought into his very serious and sometimes unhappy life much genuine fun.

of Mason and Dixon's Line to permit slavery within their borders, but they believed that if they could get slavery introduced into the Territories, they would in time admit these Territories as slave States. As every State sent two Senators to Congress, the more Senators there were who favored slavery, the longer would the slave States keep their control in national affairs. There had been more free States than slave States, but while practically everybody in the slave States favored slavery, the feeling in the free States was divided. In the free States, some men, known as abolitionists, wished to destroy slavery at once all over the land, while others were content if they could keep slavery from being introduced into the Territories. In the free States, too, there were large numbers of men who sympathized with the South. The aim of the slaveholders, then, was to push slavery into the Territories, and finally into all the States, while the aim of the men with whom Lincoln had allied himself was to keep slavery where it was, in the hope that with the admission of the new Territories as free States the power of slavery in national politics would grow gradually but surely less.

Many of the slaves in the South were well cared for; probably only a few masters were cruel to their negroes. But wherever there were slaves, whether treated kindly or harshly, under the law the negro had no rights which the white man was bound to respect. It was not because the masters were cruel, but because the law permitted them to do what they pleased with their slaves, treating them as property and not as human beings, and because this view of the law seemed morally wrong, that the movement against slavery was becoming more powerful in the Northern States. It

was not because the slaveholders actually did wrong, but because the law permitted them to do wrong, that men were beginning to protest against the extension of slavery.

Henry Clay, the Whig candidate for the presidency, was defeated by James K. Polk of Tennessee, a friend of the slaveholders. The election of Polk encouraged the politicians in the Southern States to bring on a war with Mexico, in the expectation that the success of the war would add Texas to the Union as a slave State. It was a war for the extension of slavery which Lincoln and his friends believed was altogether wrong. Lincoln determined to go to Congress and fight the proposed wrong. He was elected in 1846, and was the only Whig Congressman from Illinois. His eight years in the State legislature, together with his close study of politics and the history of his country, helped make his influence felt at Washington. His old rival, Douglas, was elected the same year from another district, but before his term commenced he was made Senator.

When Lincoln got to Washington, he found the slaveholding interests protected by law on all sides. Although the Whigs were in the majority, there was nothing they could do to put an end to slavery. The city of Washington was in a little District ten miles square, surrounded by the slave territory of Virginia and Maryland. Just in sight of his boarding-place Lincoln saw what he described as "a sort of negro livery stable," where black men and women were bought and sold. This District was under the control of Congress. So Lincoln conceived the idea of persuading the people of the District to sell their slaves and of paying for them out of the United States Treasury, and forbidding slavery in the District of Columbia for all time to come.

But Lincoln's plan failed. People did not yet fully realize the wickedness of slavery; Lincoln saw that something more must be done to awaken men's consciences, or slavery would not only keep its hold on the South and in the new State of Texas, but would spread into the Territories and some day even into the free States. The Democratic party was in power and was controlled by the South, and the Whig party was unwilling to take sides on the great question. A few brave men were opposing slavery, but there was no political party organized to carry on the fight. The Republican party was not yet born.

## CHAPTER VIII

### RIDING THE CIRCUIT

WITH Texas admitted into the Union as a slave State, the troubles between the South and the North seemed at an end. The South had gained what it wanted, while the North still had the assurance that the Missouri Compromise would save Kansas and Nebraska and all the new Territories to freedom. Politics settled down to a struggle among the politicians for the offices. Lincoln went home to Springfield and took up again the practice of the law.

For eight years he devoted his whole time to his profession. Innumerable stories are told of his law practice during these years. The judge, David Davis, afterward a justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, held court in fourteen different counties in central Illinois. Every week he would move on to the next county seat, the leading members of the bar going with him. They rode horseback over the prairie, and filled in the spare hours as they rode, or consoled themselves for the poor fare at the country taverns, by telling stories or talking politics. The lawyers who rode the circuit with Lincoln and Judge Davis were men of ability, who had to try their cases and argue their points of law without the help of books. "Rough-and-ready" practitioners, they had learned to reason out their cases upon broad principles, and to take care of themselves and of their client's interests by thinking clearly and quickly upon their feet. Lincoln seemed particularly well fitted to succeed under

these conditions, and his reputation as a lawyer grew steadily.

It is said of him that he could try a good case better than any of the others, but that, when convinced that his client was in the wrong, he would withdraw from the case rather than show the court, as he was sure to do, that he believed his client was wrong. Once a mean man came to engage him to sue a widow. After hearing his story Lincoln said: "Yes, there is a reasonable chance of gaining your case for you! I can set a whole township at loggerheads. I can distress a poor widow and her six fatherless children, and so get for you six hundred dollars which rightfully belongs as much to her as to you. But you should remember that some things that are legally right are not morally right. I shall not take your case, but I'll give you some advice for nothing. You seem to be an active, energetic man. I would advise you to try your hand at making six hundred dollars some other way."

He was fair and even generous to the other side unless he believed there was fraud or meanness for him to punish. Then he was merciless. A paper of his has been preserved which gives the notes of a closing speech he made to a jury. It was a case in which he was attorney for the widow of a Revolutionary soldier who had been cheated out of her pension money by a dishonest agent. His notes for his argument read: "No contract. — Not professional services. — Unreasonable charge. — Money retained by defendant. — Not given by plaintiff. — Revolutionary War. — Describe Valley Forge, privations, ice, soldier's bleeding feet. — Plaintiff's husband. — Soldier leaving home for army. — SKIN DEFENDANT. — Close." Lincoln was deeply stirred in delivering this speech, and the jury



were in tears, while the miserable pension agent whom Lincoln had "skinned" suffered tortures under the operation.

Lincoln was often criticised by the other lawyers because he charged such small fees. They declared that it was no wonder he was poor. On one occasion Judge Davis put him through a mock trial for this offense, and, in fun, censured him at the bar of the court. On another occasion he embarrassed one of his law partners by making him pay back half of a fee that a client had willingly paid. "The money comes out of the pocket of a poor crazy girl," Lincoln said, "and I would rather starve than swindle her in this way."

He was absolutely fair with the court. Once a partner prepared for filing in a case an answer which was not founded on facts, and Lincoln made him withdraw it. "You know it's a sham," he said, "and a sham is very often but another name for a lie. Don't let it go on record. The cursed thing may come staring us in the face long after this suit has been forgotten."

He had heard the word "demonstrate" as one of the things that were done in geometry. He made up his mind, as he had in his boyhood, that he would learn how to demonstrate his points, that is, make them so clear that men could not help accepting them. He got himself a copy of Euclid's geometry and, as he rode the circuit, he committed to memory many of Euclid's demonstrations. He was still learning how to bound his thought on all sides. His speech became so crystal clear that men said, "If Lincoln is in the case, there will be no trouble in understanding what it is all about." He once said to his young partner, Mr. Herdon, as he found fault with his high-flown, oratorical way of arguing his cases: "Billy, don't shoot too high

— aim lower, and the common people will understand you. They are the ones you want to reach. The educated and refined people will understand you anyway.” His reading and observation had taught him that one of the best ways to make a point stick in memory is to illustrate it by a story, and he constantly told stories, both in his speeches and conversation. Court in the old eighth circuit, with Lincoln and his colleagues traveling about, eating and sleeping together, and trying their cases together, day after day, week in and week out, and telling stories wherever they met, was not a dignified, solemn place like the chamber of the Supreme Court of the United States. Lincoln was irrepressible. When he came on the scene he would introduce himself in this fashion, “Well, fellows, are n’t you glad I’ve come?” and then, out of his unlimited store, he would bring forth a new story that would sometimes make the good-natured judge adjourn court to hear it.

The clerk of the court tells how he was once fined for laughing out in the midst of a trial. “Lincoln had just come in,” he tells us, “and leaning over my desk had told me a story so irresistibly funny that I broke into a loud laugh. Judge Davis called me to order in haste, as he said sternly, ‘This must be stopped. Mr. Lincoln, you are constantly disturbing this court with your stories. Mr. Clerk, you may fine yourself five dollars for your disturbance.’ I apologized, but told the judge the story was worth the money. A few minutes later he called me to him. ‘What was that story Lincoln told you?’ he asked. I told him, and he laughed aloud in spite of himself. ‘You need not pay that fine,’ he said.”

In the earlier years of his practice, Lincoln used his

stories with great effect in his jury speeches. Once he was trying to make plain that his client, on trial for striking a man, had done the deed in an effort to defend himself, and illustrated his point by saying that his client was in the fix of the man who while carrying a pitchfork along a country road was suddenly attacked by a vicious dog. In the trouble that followed, the prongs of the pitchfork killed the dog. "What made you kill my dog?" the farmer angrily cried. "What made him try to bite me?" "But why did n't you go at him with the other end of the pitchfork?" "Why did n't he come at me with the other end of the dog?" The jury saw what self-defense meant.

In one of his cases he made fun of an opponent's long speeches. "My friend," he said, "is peculiarly constructed. When he begins to speak, his brain stops working. He makes me think of a little old steamboat we used to have on the Sangamon River in the early days. It had a five-foot boiler and a seven-foot whistle, and every time it whistled, it stopped."

His practical sense and his understanding of human nature enabled him to save the life of the son of his old Clary's Grove friend, Jack Armstrong, who was on trial for murder. Lincoln, learning of it, went to the old mother who had been kind to him in the days of his boyhood poverty and promised her that he would get her boy free. The witnesses were sure that Armstrong was guilty, and one of them declared that he had seen the fatal blow struck. It was late at night, he said, and the light of the full moon had made it possible for him to see the crime committed. Lincoln, on cross-examination, asked him only questions enough to make the jury see that it was the full moon that made it possible for the witness to see what occurred, got him to say two

or three times that he was sure of it, and seemed to give up any further effort to save the boy. But when the evidence was finished and Lincoln's time came to make his argument, he called for an almanac, which the clerk of the court had ready for him, and handed it to the jury. They saw at once that on the night of the murder there was no moon at all. They were satisfied that the witness had told what was not true. Lincoln's case was won.

He argued his cases in a straightforward way, without oratorical effort, shunning long words and strange expressions, using the language of the Bible, or illustrating what he had to say with an apt story, talking with the court and the jury as a man would talk familiarly with a group of old friends and neighbors, and "demonstrating" his points as Euclid had taught him.

Mr. Herndon, who continued as Lincoln's law partner during the later years of his life, has told of his way of keeping a crowd amused: "I have seen him surrounded by as many as two or three hundred persons, all deeply interested in the outcome of a story. His power of mimicry and his manner of recital were remarkable. All his features seemed to take part in the performance. As he neared the point of the joke, or story, every vestige of seriousness disappeared from his face. His little gray eyes sparkled; a smile seemed to gather up, curtain-like, the corners of his mouth; his frame quivered with suppressed excitement; and when the point or 'nub' of the story, as he called it, came, no one's laugh was heartier than his."

In those days he seemed not to know, or care, how he looked. He was poor, and he had a growing family. His very poverty made friends for him. His dress was simple. His hat was rusty and faded with age. He

wore a gray shawl. His coat hung loosely on his gaunt frame, and his trousers were always too short. He carried a faded green umbrella, with the letters "A. Lincoln," sewed on in white muslin. Its handle was gone, and it was usually held together with a bit of string.

With all his traveling about over the circuit, there were still four or five months in every year when court was not in session. This gave the lawyers time for other things. Lincoln's spare days were spent "mousing about the libraries in the State House." He was studying the Constitution of the United States, making himself familiar with his country's history, and, in season and out of season, studying the slavery question. It was not in his years of successful law practice, when he was one of the leaders of the bar in Illinois, that he proved his greatness as a lawyer, so much as it was in his complete mastery of the Constitution in its relation to the slavery question, as he afterward revealed it in his debates with Douglas. In the prairies of Illinois, sometimes dreaming, sometimes thinking deeply, this country attorney became one of the learned constitutional lawyers of his time.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IS BORN

BUSY as he was in the practice of law, Lincoln kept on studying the signs of the times. The speeches of abolitionist leaders came into his hands and he read regularly two Southern newspapers. He wrote an occasional political editorial for a Springfield paper and he made a few campaign speeches, but his real interest was in the practice of his profession.

While Lincoln was a looker-on at the great drama of national politics, his old-time rival, Stephen A. Douglas, Senator from Illinois, was becoming one of the chief actors, restraining, as well as he could, the growing feeling of discontent that the anti-slavery spirit in the North had bred, and casting about for some safe way in which the slave States might be held loyal to the Union. Already the politicians in the South were threatening to carry their States out of the Union unless the demands of slavery were granted. Already Douglas was dreaming that he himself might be the means of holding South and North together, and become the choice of both sections for President.

The admission of Texas as a slave State had strengthened the slave power, but it had not satisfied it. The threats of secession continued. Clay and Webster and Douglas, as well as others who dreaded war and were willing to yield almost anything to preserve the Union, devised a new measure called the Compromise of 1850, the effect of which was to increase the feeling between the North and the South. One of its features was the

passing of a new Fugitive Slave Law, which compelled citizens in the free States to help the officers of the United States capture runaway slaves and send them back to their masters. Men of the North had not seen human beings bought and sold, and, because they knew little about slavery, many thought little about it. Some who would not have been willing to own slaves believed that perhaps the negroes were better off as slaves than as free men. But when they saw a runaway black man flying through the streets, and learned that they were bound by law to help catch him and send him back to life-long bondage, they began to awaken to the seriousness of slavery as a moral question. Wherever this law was enforced, the anti-slavery feeling became more bitter.

But the passing of a new Fugitive Slave Law did not satisfy the South. If slavery was right, as many Southerners believed, it seemed hard that a slaveholder should lose his slaves when he took them into free territory. So the Southern leaders in Congress, believing that the anti-slavery spirit was unjust, sought every opportunity to strengthen the political power of the South, and compelled the passage of a law repealing the Missouri Compromise and clearing the way, as they hoped, for introducing slavery into the vast territories west and northwest of Missouri. Nebraska, as that country was called, was unsettled except by Indians. It was not to be opened for settlement until Congress could decide whether it was to continue free or become slave territory like Missouri. In 1854, Senator Douglas secured the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, opening Nebraska to settlement and leaving to the new settlers the decision of the question whether there should be slaves in the Territory or not. This plan of having

the people of the Territory settle the slavery question for themselves was called "popular sovereignty." Douglas believed that to leave to the people most concerned — not counting the slaves as people, of course, — the decision of this troublesome question was fair to everybody, and he hoped that the North as well as the South would be satisfied with it. But the South protested at once that slavery could gain nothing, for most of the voters in the Territories would favor freedom. And in the North the enemies of slavery believed that they saw in Douglas's "popular sovereignty" one more surrender of principle to the slave power. If slavery was wrong, they argued, why should the people of the Territories be allowed to make it lawful? This was the question that Douglas had to answer when he came back to Illinois on the adjournment of Congress in 1854. A crisis had come. The enemies of slavery were at last ready to say to the slave power in Congress, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther!"

Lincoln saw the danger and threw himself into politics again, heart and soul. The "irrepressible conflict" between slavery and freedom had begun in earnest. It was not long after this that he wrote a letter to his friend Joshua Speed, who had gone back to Kentucky to live. In this letter he showed how the Fugitive Slave Law and the other laws in favor of slavery had stirred his feelings. He wrote: "I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down and caught and carried back to their stripes and unrequited toil; but I bite my lips and keep quiet. . . . It is not fair for you to assume that I have no interest in a thing which has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable. You ought rather to appreciate how much the great body of the Northern people do crucify their



feelings in order to maintain their loyalty to the Constitution and the Union."

He was fair enough to see, at the same time, that there was a sincere difference of opinion between the men of the South and the men of the North. He attacked slavery as an institution, and tried to persuade men to join him in his effort to keep slavery from growing. But he had no unkind words for those who did not agree with him. One of his addresses delivered at Peoria, in 1854, makes this clear: "Let me say that I think I have no prejudice against the Southern people. They are just what we would be in their situation. If slavery did not now exist among them, they would not introduce it. If it did now exist among us, we should not instantly give it up."

The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, largely through Douglas's efforts, created instant alarm in Illinois. Party feeling had not run high for many years. Douglas, who was believed at heart to be opposed to the extension of slavery, had enjoyed the confidence of the State in a remarkable way. Suddenly the entire situation changed. Thousands of Illinois Democrats who were opposed to slavery began to doubt Douglas and to be dissatisfied with his leadership.

The senatorial term of James Shields, Lincoln's ancient adversary and Douglas's friend, came to an end, and Lincoln was the choice of the Whigs to succeed him. When the legislature met to elect a Senator, Lincoln needed five more votes to secure an election. There were five anti-slavery Democrats in the legislature, but they were unwilling to vote for Lincoln and held out for Lyman Trumbull. Trumbull's five votes and Lincoln's forty-four were enough to control the

election. So Lincoln, fearful lest a Douglas Democrat might be elected, made haste to withdraw from the race and to persuade his friends to vote for Trumbull. In this way Lincoln suffered one more disappointment, but, by securing Trumbull's election, gained for freedom one more vote in the United States Senate.

Up to this time in the Northern States, party lines had not been drawn on the slavery question. There were Slavery Democrats and Free Soil Democrats, and there were Slavery Whigs and Free Soil Whigs. But by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the adoption of measures which made slavery possible in Kansas and Nebraska, the voters of Illinois were so aroused that they refused to interest themselves in any other political question. The Whig party began to go to pieces, and many Democrats questioned Douglas's leadership for the first time. Anti-slavery men broke away from both Whigs and Democrats and organized the Republican party, whose one aim was to keep slavery out of the Territories. The friends of slavery within the Whig party in Illinois became Douglas Democrats, while the Republicans chose Lincoln for their leader.

From this time until Lincoln defeated Douglas for the presidency in 1860, there was only one great national issue — the slavery question; and the two men, Lincoln and Douglas, by virtue of their leadership, were constantly pitted against each other, the one declaring that slavery was a moral wrong and demanding that it be kept out of the Territories, the other saying nothing about the right or wrong of slavery, but insisting that the people of the Territories be allowed to decide for or against it as they saw fit, and adding that he "did not care whether slavery was voted up or voted down."

The first national convention of the new Republican party was held, in 1856, at Philadelphia. It named John C. Frémont for President and William L. Dayton for Vice-President. In this convention Lincoln received 110 votes for Vice-President. He was evidently not disappointed with the result, for he wrote to one of the delegates afterward: "When you meet Judge Dayton, present him my respects, and tell him I think him a far better man than I for the position he is in."

The presidential campaign of 1856 was, from the first, a straight-out fight between the friends and the enemies of slavery. James Buchanan led the slavery forces and John C. Frémont commanded the hearty support of nearly all the anti-slavery people. A small number of Whigs, still unwilling to take sides, either against slavery or in favor of it, nominated Millard Fillmore for President, and adopted a platform, charging the other parties with trying to destroy the Union. The plan of the Democrats to give over to slavery the new States of Kansas and Nebraska, if the people living there should vote that way, and the declaration of Senator Douglas that he did not care which way the people of Kansas and Nebraska voted, filled Lincoln with indignation. He went into the political struggle with a grim determination to "demonstrate" to the people of his State that slavery was wrong.

The idea of celebrating the Fourth of July by reading the Declaration of Independence to the people and proclaiming that "all men are created free and equal," in a land where slavery was permitted and where new territory was being turned over forever to the control of the slave power, seemed horrible to him. In bitterness he exclaimed: "The Fourth of July has not

quite dwindled away; it is still a great day — for burning firecrackers!!!”

The time was at hand when men could no longer refuse to take sides. Buchanan was elected, but the Republicans had cast nearly a million and a half votes. Lincoln and the other enemies of slavery felt that their fight for freedom had not been in vain. In his next great public address in the summer of 1858, Lincoln spoke these words of cheer to his followers: “Two years ago the Republicans of the nation mustered over thirteen hundred thousand strong. We did this under the single impulse of resistance to a common danger, with every external circumstance against us. Of strange, discordant, and even hostile elements, we gathered from the four winds, and formed and fought the battle through, under the constant hot fire of a disciplined, proud, and pampered enemy. Did we brave all then to falter now, — now, when that same enemy is wavering, dissevered, and belligerent? The result is not doubtful. We shall not fail — if we stand firm, we shall not fail. Wise counsels may accelerate, or mistakes delay it, but, sooner or later, the victory is sure to come.”

## CHAPTER X

### THE DEBATES WITH DOUGLAS

THE term of Stephen A. Douglas, as United States Senator, was about to expire in 1858. He returned to Illinois in the summer of that year to find the people aroused over the slavery question as they never had been before, and the new Republican party under Lincoln's leadership eager to do battle.

The two men had been rivals for twenty years. It was while Lincoln was serving his first term in the legislature that Douglas, a young man of twenty-one, had come from Vermont to Illinois. He was as poor as Lincoln had been four years before, when at the same age he drove his father's ox-team across the prairie. But Lincoln remained poor and obscure, while Douglas rose at once to prominence. At twenty-two Douglas was State's attorney, and in six years more he had been legislator, register of the land-office, secretary of state, and judge of the supreme court. At thirty-three he had served two terms in Congress and was made United States Senator. He was reëlected Senator in 1852, and now, in 1858, he was asking the people of Illinois to elect him again. He had been twice a prominent candidate for President, and he was now the most conspicuous man in public life in the United States. In the legislature of the State and in Congress, in court and on the stump, he and Lincoln had been constantly in each other's way. Even in the social life of Springfield and in seeking the good graces of Mary Todd, he had been Lincoln's rival.

The two men were most unlike, in looks, in manner of speech, in social condition, and in temperament. It was a strange rivalry. Lincoln was a physical giant, lank and bony in figure, yellow in face, with high cheekbones, a long neck, a heavy jaw, and a large mouth with deep lines drawn about it. With his hollow cheeks and his look of hopeless melancholy, when his face was in repose, his gray eyes deep set beneath bushy eyebrows and giving out no expression, except when he was aroused from his habit of absent-minded contemplation, he was at all times a figure at once fascinating and unapproachable. When he was awakened from his far-away mood, his eyes flashed and his face lighted up with a smile whose sweetness and charm were irresistible.

His voice was a high, clear tenor which, in his occasional moments of passionate excitement, became thin and shrill. He wore shabby clothes, probably because he could not afford anything better, but he cared little for appearances. His mind was absorbed with serious things.

Douglas was a little over five feet in height, and thickset, with a lion-like head crowned with a luxuriance of soft brown hair. His voice has been compared with the rich bass tones of a cathedral organ, thrilling men's bodies as well as their souls. He dressed with scrupulous neatness, and carried himself with the grace and some of the imperious air of a prince of the blood royal. His life had been one continuous series of successes. Everything he wanted had come to him, as if by right, until he considered himself a child of fortune, while Lincoln had learned by bitter experience all the lessons that disappointment and sorrow have to teach. In this struggle for the senatorship, Douglas was to

have one more victory and Lincoln another disappointment.

In one of his speeches, Lincoln paid this tribute to his adversary: "Twenty-two years ago," he said, "Judge Douglas and I became acquainted. We were both young then, he a trifle younger than I (four years). Even then we were both ambitious—I perhaps quite as much as he. With me the race of ambition has been a failure—a flat failure. With him it has been one of splendid success. His name fills the nation and is not unknown in foreign lands. I affect no contempt for the high eminence he has reached. I would rather stand upon that eminence than wear the richest crown that ever decked a monarch's brow. The judge means to keep me down—not put me down, for I have never been up." In this tribute Lincoln showed in his own nature a modesty for which the world has always loved him.

Having made up his mind that the slavery question must be brought home to every voter, and that Douglas's position, of not caring whether slavery was extended into the Territories or not, was wrong, Lincoln challenged Douglas to a public discussion of the question. He believed that a series of debates in which he and Douglas should speak from the same platform to the same people would give him an opportunity to reach many of the Democrats who would not come to Republican meetings, and would keep the people alive to the seriousness of the situation. Douglas accepted the challenge. The debates were arranged so that one should occur at each of seven different places. Each debate was to last for three hours, the time being divided equally between the two speakers. The places chosen were Ottawa, Freeport, Jonesboro, Charleston, Gales-

burg, Quincy, and Alton. These were small country towns widely scattered over the State.

Hither flocked the friends of each speaker, each crowd wild with enthusiasm for its own candidate. Men came from other States, and reporters from Chicago, New York, and other cities, traveled with the speakers, the Chicago reporters sending to their papers every word that was spoken, so that straightway the world was reading the speeches and discussing everywhere the right and wrong of slavery and the arguments for and against popular sovereignty which Douglas and Lincoln were making.

The two men were equally matched. Each had had a lifelong training in public speaking and each was perfectly at home on the platform, quick to take advantage in the discussion, and ready to meet any attack, however savage. It was a battle of the giants. Each was admired and loved by his own supporters and admired and feared by the supporters of the other. And each, firmly convinced that he was right, had the confidence in his own cause which a conviction of the right always gives. Both were terribly in earnest.

Lincoln commenced his speech accepting the nomination to the senatorship with a prophecy about slavery which he believed might not come true for "a hundred years at least," but which was actually fulfilled seven years later, when, as a result of the Civil War, the slaves were set free throughout the United States. He said: "A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either



the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South."

This was a statement of what he believed to be true, but Douglas insisted that it expressed Lincoln's wish rather than his belief. In Douglas's mind it meant that Lincoln would destroy the Union unless he could drive slavery out of all the States. "Mr. Lincoln goes for a war of the sections," Douglas argued, "until one or the other shall be subdued. I go for the great principle of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the right of the people to decide for themselves." But Lincoln responded that when Douglas denied the truth that "a house divided against itself cannot stand," he was disputing a much higher authority than Abraham Lincoln.

It was during the debate at Charleston that Lincoln found an opportunity to make use of the knowledge of geometry which he had picked up as he rode the circuit not many years before. Judge Douglas had answered some direct charges relating to his public acts that had been made by Senator Trumbull by calling Senator Trumbull a liar. Douglas was greatly excited throughout this particular debate, and Lincoln's attacks had not been soothing. "If you have ever studied geometry," Lincoln argued, "you remember that by a course of reasoning Euclid proves that all the angles in a triangle are equal to two right angles. Euclid has shown you how to work it out. Now, if you undertake to disprove that proposition, and to show that it is erroneous, would you prove it to be false by calling Euclid a liar?"

As the debates proceeded, the public interest grew to a feverish state of excitement. The audience in some places numbered twenty thousand, the men and women and children coming into the town on horseback, in wagons, and on foot, with brass bands and with fife and drum, and crowding the dusty highways for fifteen or twenty miles in every direction. As they neared the town, processions were formed with banners and transparencies on which some political sentiment was printed, such as, "The government was made for white men — Douglas for life"; or "Old Abe the Giant-Killer and Rail-Splitter." A common feature of the parade was a group of pretty girls in white on horseback representing the States of the Union, while a sad-looking girl in black rode alone bearing a banner that proclaimed her to the world, "Kansas — I will be free." The Democratic procession had to follow a different road from that taken by the Republicans to avoid the danger of a riot.

When the speaking began, the shouting and the tumult ceased and men listened breathless to the man they loved or feared, feeling that on the words they heard the fate of the nation rested. Sometimes one or the other debater caught the infection of the popular excitement and sprang to his feet to deny his opponent's statements, but was pulled back into his seat with the reminder that silence would be wise.

When Lincoln arose to speak, he showed at first some timidity as he stood at full height towering above his rival, so that as he began to answer the elegant Douglas, even his friends, for the moment, felt sorry for him. He planted himself squarely on his feet, with his hands clasped behind him, and stood almost motionless, talking in an awkward, friendly fashion to men

whom he treated like old acquaintances. As he warmed to his subject, he would soon forget himself. He had a fashion of standing still, while he spoke in his deliberate, familiar way, until he came to some climax where he thought he had made a point on Senator Douglas, when he would swing his long right arm with his long bony forefinger in an abrupt circle as if drawing a line in the air about the point he had just made, and there would come over his face a smile of assured good will, as if to say in confidence to an audience of old friends, "Did n't I get the Little Giant that time?" This characteristic trick of speech and the warmth of the smile that went with it seldom failed to win the sympathy of any wavering voter into whose eager face he looked.

A boy who heard the debates recalls that "while I had thought Lincoln the homeliest man I ever saw, he was the handsomest man I ever listened to in a speech. Lincoln, in action, no one has ever been able to describe. He was simply grandeur itself."

One of the reporters who later became a journalist of note has described his unique way of speaking: "The impression made upon me by the orator was quite overpowering. I have never heard anything since that I would put on a higher plane of oratory. All the strings that play upon the human heart and understanding were touched with masterly skill and force, while beyond and above all skill was the overwhelming conviction pressed upon the audience that the speaker was charged with an irresistible and inspiring duty to his fellow men. Although I heard him many times afterward, I shall longest remember him as I then saw the tall, angular form with the long, angular arms, at times bent nearly double with excitement, like a large flail animating two smaller ones, the mobile face wet

with perspiration which he discharged in drops as he threw his head this way and that like a projectile — not a graceful figure, yet not an ungraceful one. After listening to him a few minutes, nobody would mind whether he was graceful or not. All thought of grace or form would be lost in the exceeding attractiveness of what he was saying.”

The debates started all America to thinking. The slavery question was no longer only a question of politics; it had come to be a question of good and evil. And the man who had presented unanswerably the cause of liberty had become a national figure, to whom all who would restrain the slave power were beginning to turn for leadership.

Lincoln summed up the whole controversy in these words, which left nothing more to be said: “That is the real issue. That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles, right and wrong, throughout the world.”

Douglas won the senatorship, but his advocacy of popular sovereignty had driven President Buchanan and the Southern leaders into active hostility to him and to all that he had argued for, and split the Democratic party in two, the Northern Democrats being for him and the Southern Democrats bitterly opposed to him. Lincoln lost the senatorship, but he had gained the whole North for an audience, and had given the Republican party courage for the national struggle that was soon to come. He himself was no longer an obscure country lawyer. The world was beginning to listen to him and to watch with eagerness for whatever he might have to say.

He was disappointed at his defeat, but he felt that the fight had not been in vain, for it had awakened the enemies of slavery to the real danger that confronted them. He wrote to a friend: "I am glad I made the late race. It gave me a hearing on the great and durable question of the age, which I could have had in no other way; and though I now sink out of view, and shall be forgotten, I believe I have made some marks which will tell for the cause of civil liberty long after I am gone."

## CHAPTER XI

### THE NOMINATION

THE campaign for the senatorship had left Lincoln poorer than ever ; it had kept him from earning anything at the law, and it had burdened him with heavy expense. Douglas had gone about in private cars and special trains, while Lincoln had only such accommodation as he had the money to pay for, sometimes a horse, sometimes a crowded railway coach, sometimes the caboose of a leisurely freight train. When he made his contribution to the campaign fund, it was with the confession that he was "absolutely without money now, even for household purposes." He went back reluctantly to the law, for he felt that his country needed his services now more than ever before. To a friend he wrote, "The fight must go on. The cause of civil liberty must not be surrendered at the end of one, or even one hundred defeats." He earned a little by delivering a few lectures, and he got back for a few months into a fairly active law practice. But it was only for a few months. To him came appeals from all parts of the country to help in the fight against slavery. He declined an invitation to speak in Boston in April, 1859, because he could not leave his work ; but in the fall, he spoke in Kansas and Wisconsin, and followed Douglas into Ohio, speaking in the same places and answering the Little Giant's arguments much as he had done in Illinois the year before.

Lincoln's speeches had been printed and read all over the country. Republicans here and there were begin-

ning to say to one another, "If Douglas is to be the Democratic candidate for the presidency, what better choice could there be for his antagonist than Abraham Lincoln?" When an occasional suggestion of this sort reached him, Lincoln was entirely sincere in his answer, "I must say I do not think myself fit for the presidency"; or, as he wrote to a Western judge, "It seems as if they ought to find somebody who knows more than I do."

Early in 1860, he was invited to New York to lecture at Cooper Institute. The audience which was to hear him was made up of some of the most cultivated people in the United States. David Dudley Field and Horace Greeley were on the committee. William Cullen Bryant was to preside. The idea that he, the self-taught, modest country lawyer could possibly bring anything to this educated company of Eastern people that they would care to hear, seemed strange to him, and he hesitated to accept the invitation.

It is interesting to know how the orator from the prairies impressed one of that audience who has given us his recollections of the speech. "It is now forty years," said Mr. Joseph H. Choate, "since I first saw and heard Abraham Lincoln, but the impression which he left on my mind is ineffaceable. . . . He appeared in every sense of the word like one of the plain people among whom he loved to be counted. At first sight there was nothing impressive or imposing about him — except that his great stature singled him out from the crowd; his clothes hung awkwardly on his giant frame, his face was of a dark pallor without the slightest tinge of color; his seamed and rugged features bore the furrows of hardship and struggle; his deepset eyes looked sad and anxious; his countenance in repose gave little

evidence of that brain-power which had raised him from the lowest to the highest station among his countrymen ; as he talked to me before the meeting, he seemed ill at ease, with that sort of apprehension which a young man might feel before presenting himself to a new and strange audience, whose critical disposition he dreaded. . . . When he spoke he was transformed ; his eye kindled, his voice rang, his face shone and seemed to light up the whole assembly. For an hour and a half he held his audience in the hollow of his hand."

Lincoln chose for a text Senator Douglas's proposition that the men who had created the nation and framed its Constitution "had understood the slavery question just as well and even better than we do now," and proceeded to show that they had seen the evils of slavery, and planned the government so as to keep slavery out of the Territories and put it in the way of ultimate extinction. He went on : "As those fathers marked it, so let it be again marked, as an evil not to be extended, but to be tolerated and protected only because of and so far as its actual presence among us makes that toleration and protection a necessity." This was as far as Lincoln's party had yet gone in its opposition to slavery, — that it was "an evil not to be extended." The difference between South and North, as he explained it, was a difference as to whether slavery was right, as the South believed, or wrong, as the North believed.

"Wrong as we think slavery is," Lincoln said in the conclusion of his speech, "we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation ; but can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow it to spread into the national Territories, and to overrun us here in these free States ? If our sense of duty forbids



this, then let us stand by our duty fearlessly and effectively. . . . Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the government, nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

From New York he went into New England, where he followed the same line of argument, insisting that under the Declaration of Independence the negro was entitled to an equal right with the white man in the enjoyment of life, liberty, and happiness. "One of the reasons why I am opposed to slavery is just here," he argued. "When one starts poor, as most do in the race of life, free society is such that he knows he can better his condition; he knows that there is no fixed condition of labor for his whole life. I am not ashamed to confess that twenty-five years ago I was a hired laborer, mauling rails, at work on a flatboat—just what might happen to any poor man's son. I want every man to have a chance—and I believe a black man is entitled to it—in which he can better his condition—when he may look forward and hope to be a hired laborer this year and the next, work for himself afterward, and finally to hire men to work for him. That is the true system."

At New Haven he made his hearers think of slavery as a serpent. He said: "If I saw a venomous snake crawling in the road, any man would say I might seize the nearest stick and kill it; but if I found that snake in bed with my children, that would be another question. I might hurt the children more than the snake, and it might bite them. Much more, if I found it in bed with my neighbor's children, and I had bound

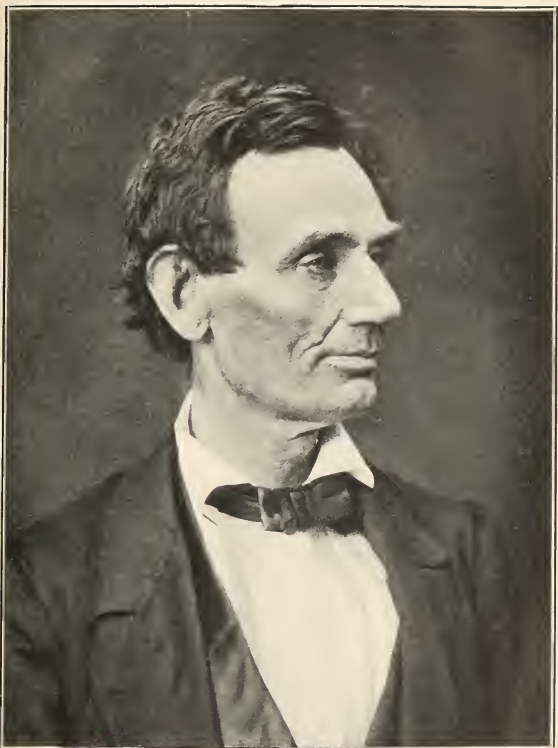
Democratic National Convention met in April at Charleston, South Carolina. Over half the delegates were for Douglas, but it required a two-thirds vote to make a nomination. They adopted a platform in favor of popular sovereignty over the protest of the Southern delegates, who wanted the party to declare for universal slavery. "We want nothing more," the slavery delegates said, "than a simple declaration that negro slaves are property, and we want the recognition of the obligation of the federal government to protect that property like all other." To this the Douglas delegates refused to agree. Delegates from twelve of the slave States left the convention and later nominated John C. Breckenridge for President. What was left of the convention adjourned until June, and then nominated Stephen A. Douglas. From this time until the election, the Democratic party remained divided, the Southern Democrats supporting Breckenridge and most of the Northern Democrats remaining loyal to Douglas.

The week before the Republican National Convention at Chicago, the Illinois Republicans held their State convention at Decatur. Lincoln was sitting on the platform when a delegate announced that an old Democrat of Macon County wanted to make a contribution. Just at this moment John Hanks came into the hall bearing two old-time fence-rails decorated with flags and a streamer, on which was printed: —

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The Rail Candidate for  
President in 1860.

Two rails from a lot of three thousand made in 1830 by  
John Hanks and Abe Lincoln."



Copyright, 1881, George B. Ayres, Philadelphia

### LINCOLN IN 1860

(From an original negative taken at Lincoln's home in Springfield, soon after his nomination. When he saw the proof Lincoln remarked, "Well, that expresses me better than any I have seen.")



It was an exciting moment. To the convention the rails meant that, under Abraham Lincoln's leadership, the struggle they were just entering would be between the plain people of the Lincoln type and a powerful slave aristocracy who had no sympathy for labor. The convention went wild. Lincoln stood awkwardly, almost bashfully, smiling at the enthusiasm of his friends while he waited for quiet to say: "Gentlemen, I suppose you want to know something about those things," pointing to the rails. "I don't know whether we made those rails or not; the fact is, I don't think they are a credit to the makers" (laughing as he spoke). "But I do know this. I made rails then, and I think I could make better ones than those now."

The Chicago Convention met on May 16. Among its delegates were the greatest orators and statesmen of the day. They were seeking a candidate whom men of all shades of opinion could support, from the abolitionists demanding Seward's nomination, to the men of the border States, who, although favoring slavery, were loyal to the Union. The candidate of whose nomination the Eastern delegates were confident was William H. Seward of New York, who had been the governor of New York and the Republican leader in the United States Senate. But Seward's hatred of slavery had led him to go much farther than Lincoln had ever gone and to speak of a law that was higher than the Constitution and the Supreme Court. Besides this it was feared that his extreme opinions on other political questions might make it harder to elect him than it would be to elect a more moderate man. People who admired Seward as a brilliant leader still feared that he could not carry the Northern vote as against Douglas. So it came about that Lincoln was chosen.

While the balloting was going on, Lincoln was waiting for the news at Springfield, tossing ball and trying hard to restrain his excitement. When at last the message came that he was nominated, he was sitting in a newspaper office. He looked long at the message, folded it and put it into his vest-pocket as he remarked quietly, "There's a little short woman down at our house who would like to hear this. I'll go down and tell her."

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ELECTION

THROUGH the long, anxious summer and fall of 1860, Lincoln stayed at home in Springfield. In a room at the State House he made welcome the multitude of visitors who came to see him, meeting in the same easy, friendly fashion, the dignified statesman from far away and the old lady from New Salem who had brought a pair of woolen socks of her own knitting for "Old Abe" to wear when he became President of the United States. It took no card of admission to get into Lincoln's presence. Daily, men crowded into the room to learn the news of the campaign and to laugh with Lincoln at his own inimitable stories.

The fact that men spoke familiarly of him as "Old Abe the Rail-Splitter" made many Eastern Republicans uneasy lest he prove unfit for the fearful responsibility that would come to the new President. But when they had talked with him at Springfield, their eyes were opened and they knew him. They found him wise and strong and calm; and as the months passed, something in his spirit took hold upon them as it has upon the world in these later years, and awoke in them a tenderness of affection for this man who had made his way through poverty and sorrow to the leadership of a great people.

There were three other candidates for the presidency, each supported by a strong political party and each advocating different principles of government. The Northern Democrats, believers in popular sover-

eignty, and caring little about slavery, were for Stephen A. Douglas. The Southern Democrats, believing firmly in the righteousness of slavery and demanding that Congress protect slave property in the Territories, supported Breckenridge of Kentucky. The men who were afraid lest the agitation of the slavery question by either its friends or its enemies would bring ruin to the country organized the Constitutional Union party and nominated John Bell of Tennessee, on a campaign platform which "recognized no political principle other than the Constitution of the country, the Union of the States, and the enforcement of the laws."

Those who opposed slavery in the Territories were all within the Republican party, and, as the campaign went on and they came to know Lincoln better, worked tirelessly and almost passionately for his election. Those who either favored slavery or did not care whether it won or lost made up more than half of all the voters in the United States, but their votes were divided among Douglas and Breckenridge and Bell. Before November came, it was plain that the Republicans would profit by the divisions among the other three parties and would elect Abraham Lincoln to the presidency.

The feeling of unrest in the South was growing. Threats of secession continued, and became so frequent that Lincoln began to wonder if the South really meant it. Every effort was made to get him to say something that would satisfy the South of his kindly feeling, or something that would persuade his equally violent anti-slavery friends in the North that he meant to do nothing to strengthen the cause of slavery. To those who tried to get him to say what he intended to do he answered: "The time comes upon every man when it



is best for him to keep his lips closed. That time has come upon me." And when they insisted on his assuring the South that he would not interfere with slavery, he only answered by reminding them of what he had said in his many speeches in the past: "Those who will not read or heed what I have already publicly said would not read or heed a repetition of it. 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.'" So he wrote no letters, and made no speeches, but waited patiently and in silence for the people to make their choice.

The men who had been candidates for the Republican nomination for the presidency, and particularly William H. Seward of New York and Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, wrote and spoke and worked day and night in aid of his election. Seward gave to his home newspaper on the night of his own defeat an editorial article in which he said: "No truer or firmer defender of the Republican faith could have been found than the distinguished citizen on whom the honors of the nomination have fallen." The men of letters, Holmes, Whittier, Bryant, Lowell, and George William Curtis, came at once to his support. But the entire North was not friendly. There were the abolitionists, many of whom fought him bitterly and applied to him that scornful name, "the Slave Hound of Illinois." Although their only hope of ever getting rid of slavery lay in his election, they refused to trust him. More disappointing to him than the unreasoning enmity of the abolitionists was the unfriendly feeling of many of the preachers in his own town of Springfield. He could not understand it. Nor could they understand, in after years, how it was that they had so misjudged him.

"These men," he said, "well know that I am for

freedom in the Territories, freedom everywhere as far as law will permit, and that my opponents are for slavery. They know this, and yet with this book" (drawing the New Testament from his pocket) "in their hands, in the light of which human bondage cannot live a moment, they are going to vote against me. I do not understand it at all. I know there is a God, and that He hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming, and I know that His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me, and I think He has, I believe I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything; I know I am right because I know that liberty is right. . . . Douglas does n't care whether slavery is voted up or down, but God cares, and humanity cares, and I care, and with God's help I shall not fail. I may not see the end; but it will come, . . . and these men will find they have not read their Bible right."

The future as he saw it was in God's hands. As he heard from the South the mutterings of rebellion, the threats of the ruin that would come upon the country if he should be chosen its President, a sense of his own helplessness and of his need of divine strength came to him. He grew more religious as this sense of need became greater. "If any church will make as its only requirement obedience to the command, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself,'" he declared, "I will join it."

As the months passed the excitement grew. Lincoln kept silence at home while Douglas traveled over the country, in the South as well as in the North, addressing the people in his passionate, imperious way and seeking to arouse them to a sense of the dangers they

were facing. He boldly attacked the Southern politicians for their threats of breaking up the Union, and appealed to the loyalty of the masses who had always listened to him before, only to find they had lost faith in him and were bent on his defeat.

The telegrams on election night soon told of Lincoln's success. Before morning he fell into one of his melancholy moods, weighed down with the vision of a divided country to govern and a bitter war to fight, and wanting to be left alone with his anxious thoughts. In the strain of the excitement which he was going through, there came to him a vision that seemed to foretell disaster. From his boyhood he had believed that through men's dreams come promises and warnings for their guidance, from on high. He had thrown himself upon a couch to rest and, as he lay there, he saw his giant figure reflected in a mirror. But there were two images of himself, the face of one bearing the flush of health, while the other was gray, with something of the pallor of death upon it. It made him uneasy, and he got up and walked about to get rid of the horror it gave him; yet when he came back a second and a third time, the double image was still there. He spoke of it to Mrs. Lincoln, and they made up their minds that this was a prophecy that he was to be President twice, but that he would not live through his second term.

In one of his dreams he saw himself passing through a great throng of people. Men made way for him, but as they did so, one said with scorn, "He's a common-looking fellow." "Friend," he said in his dream, "the Lord prefers common-looking people; that is why He made so many of them."

During the next four months the excitement continued at fever-heat. The Southern leaders began to carry

out the threats they had made during the campaign. The conspiracy to break up the Union became a reality four days after the election, when the Senators from South Carolina resigned. The Southern States held conventions, voted to withdraw from the Union, and provided millions of dollars for war. The South was confident that secession would come about without shedding a drop of blood, while the North was panic-stricken, ready to give up almost anything that the South might ask. Until he should become President in March, Lincoln was helpless. He kept his temper sweet, as he had learned to do in his long struggle with adversity. At the mass meeting held in celebration of his election he was able to say: "In all our rejoicings let us neither express nor cherish any hard feelings toward any citizen who has differed with us. Let us at all times remember that all American citizens are brothers of a common country."

To those who were urging the North to give up all that it had won by the election, he privately counseled patience and firmness. "There is no possible compromise upon the extension of slavery," he wrote. "On that point hold firm, as with a chain of steel."

As the time drew near when he must go East to take up his duties as President, he went from Springfield for a little visit to his stepmother at her farm near Charleston, Illinois. He visited his father's grave and left directions for a monument to his father's memory. Here he met the survivors of the Johnston and Hanks families with whom he had come to Illinois, a barefooted immigrant, thirty-one years before. The mother, whose love had followed him through all the years, gave him her blessing, and as in tears she said good-by, told him of her fear that wicked men would kill him. To this same

melancholy prophecy which another old-time friend gave him he answered gayly, "Well, Hannah, if they do kill me, I shall never die again."

On the morning of February 11, 1861, it rained heavily. A special train had been provided to take the new President and his party to Washington. Two or three hundred people had gathered at the little Springfield station. Just as the train was starting, Mr. Lincoln asked the conductor to wait a moment. He turned toward the people, removed his tall hat, paused for several seconds until he could control his emotions, and then slowly and with deep feeling gave them this simple farewell:—

"No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. All the strange checkered past seems to crowd upon my mind. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope your prayers will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell."

An old friend, who stood with bared head in the pouring rain while these words were spoken, has described the scene for us: "We have heard Mr. Lincoln speak upon a hundred different occasions, but we never

saw him so profoundly affected, nor did he ever utter an address which seemed to us as full of simple and touching eloquence. . . . Although it was raining fast when he began to speak, every hat was lifted, and every head bent forward to catch the last words of the departing chief."

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PRESIDENCY

THE new President had decided to make a round-about journey to Washington, stopping on the way at the chief cities of the North and East. He had a special purpose in doing this. Though he had faith in the people, he was not sure that they were yet fully aroused to their responsibility ; and he realized that they were not at all sure of him. He must lead them to see that the preservation of the Union depended on them.

At Indianapolis, his appeal to the citizens was meant for the loyal people of all the States. He said : “ I appeal to you again to constantly bear in mind that not with politicians, not with Presidents, not with office-seekers, but with you, is the question : Shall the Union and shall the liberties of this country be preserved to the latest generations ? ”

War was at hand. South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas, one at a time, had declared themselves to be independent States, and by resolution proclaimed the Union at an end between themselves and the United States of America. Only two days before Lincoln started from Springfield, Jefferson Davis was elected President of the Confederate States of America. While Lincoln was greeting hundreds of thousands of loyal citizens of the North on his journey to Washington, Davis was on his journey to his inauguration at Montgomery, Alabama, making speeches in all the cities and promising his Southern audiences that those who should interfere

with the new nation would "smell Southern powder and feel Southern steel."

On his journey Lincoln came face to face with an uncounted multitude of loyal men, and left them inspired with a stronger faith in the cause and a greater loyalty to the Union. For nearly a year he had kept silence, and now, as his time of power and responsibility at last approached, he spoke cautiously, arousing no passions, making neither promises nor threats but trying, in his own gentle way, to learn for himself how strong was the people's love of country and how far they would go with him in his task of saving the Union.

His was a strange nature. He felt the sorrow of men as few have ever done, for he had sounded the depths of human suffering. He sympathized and he understood. At the same time he did not allow the seriousness of life to break him down or make his sweet and gentle nature bitter. Men did not understand how he could have the heart to laugh while all the world was in tears; but somehow, in his laughter as well as in his tears, he found a way into men's hearts, and he held his place there as much by the cheer he brought as by the sorrow that he shared.

The events which were happening in the South during this momentous journey had aroused the anxiety of the whole country. The new President's speeches showed how fully he realized the seriousness of the situation; and yet he was able, at times, to play with his audience as he had done in his happiest moods at home. At Lebanon, Indiana, when the car on which he stood jerked about and almost threw him from the platform, he laughingly called the attention of the crowd to how well he was learning the poetry of motion; and at Thorntown, he had his fun with the anxious company



that had gathered to see him, excusing himself from a speech because there was no time to make one, but offering to tell them a story if every person there would promise solemnly never to repeat it. As soon as the promise was secured, the train pulled out, as Lincoln doubtless knew it would, leaving the crowd without its story, but shouting after the departing President, "We won't ever tell."

At the little town of Westfield, New York, he said, "I have a correspondent in this place, a little girl named Grace Bedell, and I would like to see her." Grace was there, eleven years old, and Lincoln stepped from the train to greet her. The year before she had written to him to suggest that he would look better with a beard, and he had answered her letter. And now, with all the cares of state and the thoughts of war crowding his mind, he was able to remember the little girl and where she lived; and he was simple-minded enough to say to her as he greeted her, "You see I have let these whiskers grow for you, Grace."

He continued to remember that there was no personal tribute to himself in the outpouring of the people as they greeted him on his journey. It merely showed their loyalty to the country he had been called to serve. "It is true," he said at Albany, "that, while I hold myself, without mock modesty, the humblest of all individuals that have ever been elevated to the presidency, I have a more difficult task to perform than any one of them."

In the same humility of spirit he said to another gathering of Union men: "I cannot but know what you all know, that without a name, perhaps without a reason why I should have a name, there has fallen upon me a task such as did not rest even upon the Father

of his Country ; and so feeling, I can turn and look for that support without which it will be impossible for me to perform that great task. I turn, then, and look to the American people, and to that God who has never forsaken them."

At Philadelphia, on Washington's birthday, he was asked to speak at Independence Hall. Here he gave new expression to the spirit which had given the Declaration of Independence to the world, and here there seemed to come to him again the thought that in time death by violence might be his lot. To a friend he once told of the many times he had been warned that he would be killed. "Soon after I was nominated at Chicago," he said, "I began to receive letters threatening my life. The first one or two made me a little uncomfortable, but I came at length to look for a regular installment of this kind of correspondence in every week's mail, and up to inauguration day I was in constant receipt of such letters, but they have ceased to give me any apprehension." The friend expressed surprise at this, but Lincoln replied in his peculiar way, "There is nothing like getting *used* to things."

The morning of March 4 found the new President still in doubt as to who were to be in his cabinet, for Seward, whom he had depended upon from the first, had taken offense because Chase was to be Secretary of the Treasury, and he was now declining to serve as Secretary of State. At the last moment, and after the ceremony of the inauguration was over, Lincoln persuaded Seward to change his mind, and the cabinet list was complete. William H. Seward of New York was to be Secretary of State ; Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, Secretary of the Treasury ; Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania, Secretary of War ; Edward Bates of



#### LINCOLN AND HIS CABINET

(The names of the Secretaries, from left to right, are : Stanton, — who succeeded Cameron, — Chase, Welles, Smith, Seward, Blair, Bates)



Missouri, Attorney-General; Gideon Welles of Connecticut, Secretary of the Navy; Caleb B. Smith of Indiana, Secretary of the Interior; Montgomery Blair of Maryland, Postmaster-General. Of these seven men, upon whose loyal support and wise advice the success of his administration as President was so largely to depend, he had no real knowledge. The first four were chosen because in the nominating convention at Chicago they had been his prominent rivals for the presidency. Bates of Missouri, and Blair of Maryland, he had chosen because they were from slave States and so could help him in the effort that he knew must be made to keep the slave States that bordered upon Mason and Dixon's Line loyal to the Union. Among them all, not one was his personal friend; and yet it was to them he must look for guidance in the struggle he was now entering.

At noon, James Buchanan, the retiring President, worn and broken with the cares of state, and glad to escape the responsibilities of war, called at Lincoln's hotel and the two drove together to the Capitol. The day was clear and beautiful, and the streets and public places were thronged. A peaceful revolution was taking place. James Buchanan, the friend of the slave power, who without protest had allowed the South to take possession of the nation's forts and arsenals, was courteously escorting to the inauguration Abraham Lincoln, the champion of the Union, who on his part was pledged to reclaim from the seceding States the property which Buchanan had permitted them to take. Close beside their carriage rode a guard of mounted soldiery. At every corner, on the housetops, and even underneath the platform on which the two Presidents were to stand, there were armed men. On a hilltop

near by a company of artillery commanded the scene. It was a peaceful revolution, but the spirit of war was in the air. "All thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it; all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war. . . . Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came." Thus Lincoln described the situation four years later. Many of the troops that guarded the presidential party wore citizens' clothes, and the day, to all outward seeming, gave no signs of the feeling that stirred every man's heart. The excitement was intense. As far as the eye could see, southward into Virginia and northward into Maryland, there was slave territory, and on every side there was hostility toward all that the new President represented.

As Lincoln rose to deliver his inaugural address there was a moment of embarrassment. He held a gold-headed cane in one hand and his printed speech in the other. When he took off his new high hat, he did not know what to do with it. He is said to have remarked in his droll way, as he looked up at the marble columns of the Capitol, "I don't see any nail on those columns to hang this on." Just then Stephen A. Douglas, for so many years his rival, stepped forward and took the hat, as he remarked with a smile, "If I can't be President, at least I can hold his hat."

Lincoln's old-time friend, Edward D. Baker, who with Lincoln and Douglas had practiced law on the Illinois circuit twenty years before, and was now a

Senator from Oregon, introduced him to the audience of over a hundred thousand people that had gathered by the east portico of the Capitol. The speech, read in a clear tenor voice, was heard throughout the vast throng, and the next morning was discussed in every household in the land. The South as well as the North had been waiting to learn what the President would do. Would he let the "wayward States depart in peace," as one of his advisers had urged? Would he carry war into the South, and compel the seceding States to yield to the federal power? Or would he wait until the South should strike the first blow? The world listened eagerly to this first expression of his purposes toward the South. The speech left no one in doubt either as to the President's intention to maintain the authority of the government and defend it against all assaults, or as to his firm determination that if war was to come, the South must strike the first blow. To the South he said: "In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict, without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to 'preserve, protect, and defend it.'" Nor was there any doubt of his kindly feeling toward his "dissatisfied fellow countrymen," for in the face of threats and violence, he was still able to reason with them and beg them to wait patiently a little longer in the assurance that their rights under the Constitution and the laws would be as secure now as ever they had been.

The closing words of the address, written by President Lincoln upon the suggestion of Secretary Seward, have become almost as familiar to the American people

as the Gettysburg oration : " I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

He turned to the venerable Chief Justice of the United States, Roger B. Taney, and with his hand upon the Bible slowly repeated the oath : " I, Abraham Lincoln, do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."



## CHAPTER XIV

### WAR BEGINS

THE day, which had opened fair, now became bleak. Buchanan drove with Lincoln from the Capitol to the White House, and there bade the new President good-by. As Lincoln entered into the possession of the bare and comfortless mansion that for four years — the rest of his life — was to be his home, he felt more keenly than ever the pang of loneliness that had been his most familiar experience. He soon found himself in the midst of a mob of the idly curious that roamed about the place as if it belonged to them. An army of office-seekers that already had begun to make his life a burden were camping there from daybreak until they were put out at night, watching eagerly for a chance interview and fairly thrusting their applications and petitions into his pockets. The trouble and anxiety that the approach of war had brought, bore heavily upon him. The persistency of the men who sought offices at his hands at this distressing time was so great that the President exclaimed, "I feel just like a man who is trying to rent out apartments in one end of his house while fire is raging in the other."

There is no loneliness to compare with that of one who finds himself in the midst of a multitude from whom he is unable to escape and who will give him neither sympathy nor peace. The country was divided. The nation's arms had been sent to Southern forts and arsenals, and its soldiers to the far-away Indian frontier. The government service was in the hands of men

whom he neither knew nor trusted. How many of them were at heart hostile to the Union, no one could tell. How soon the armies of the Confederate States might march across the Potomac and make the city of Washington the capital of the new slave republic, he could only conjecture. He knew that the regular army of the United States had been scattered, and that there were only a few hundred soldiers in Washington to guard the capital. Its commander, General Winfield Scott, was seventy-five years old and too feeble now for active service. Seven States, with seven millions of people, had declared their independence. The fate of the other slave States, particularly of Virginia and Maryland, within whose borders the city of Washington lay, hung in the balance. Every effort was being made at Richmond and at Baltimore, by Southern conspirators and those in sympathy with the slave Confederacy, to draw these two border States into the secession movement. There was only a faint hope that they might remain loyal to the Union. A rash word or an unwise step would drive Virginia and Maryland, and possibly Delaware and Kentucky and Missouri, into the Confederacy, and plunge the country into war, and that, too, at a time when there were no troops at hand to defend the capital, and the government was without arms or ammunition or money or credit.

This was the situation as President Lincoln saw it on the day he entered the White House. It was a time that called for patience and wisdom. He saw now still more clearly the truth of his prophetic words at Indianapolis, that the question of preserving the liberties of the country was not with politicians, nor with office-seekers, nor with Presidents, but with the people. And he saw more clearly than any of his advisers that he

could not hope to save the Union unless he could win the confidence of the people and command their help in all that he had to do. He resolved to treat the South with all possible patience, and to wait for the South to strike the first blow. Trusting the people as he did, he felt sure that if the South should fire on the flag, the North would unite to resist the attack. It is interesting to imagine in what different ways the other great men of that day would have met the difficulties that Lincoln settled with such wise forbearance; how Seward would have declared war not only against the rebellious States, but against the European powers as well; how Thaddeus Stevens would have proclaimed the slaves free from the very beginning and so lost the support of Delaware and Maryland and Kentucky and Missouri; how General Scott would have recognized the Confederacy as an independent nation; and how Stephen A. Douglas would have gone boldly into the heart of the South and pronounced its leaders traitors worthy of death; and how, in the plans of all these counselors who differed with Lincoln so often, there was a certainty of ruin, while the only hope of saving the Union proved to be in the slow and cautious policy of Lincoln, which permitted him to act only after he had learned all there was to be learned, and, after taking counsel, had made up his mind what course the people wanted him to pursue.

The day after the inauguration brought him face to face with a question which he must soon answer. If he answered it in one way, the Union would be dissolved and the Constitution which he had just promised "to preserve, protect, and defend" would be set at naught; if he answered it in the only other way, the South would declare war.

Within a little island fortification in Charleston

Harbor, known as Fort Sumter, Major Robert Anderson and a hundred and twenty-eight men upheld the authority of the national government, and from its flagstaff each day flung to the breeze the flag of the United States. They were really prisoners within its walls, for across the bay five thousand South Carolina soldiers under General Beauregard were encamped beneath the flag of the Palmetto State awaiting the command to open fire. Within the fort the provisions were almost gone. The governor of South Carolina had forbidden President Buchanan to come to Sumter's relief. But President Lincoln had said in his inaugural address that the power confided to him would be used "to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government," and that "the declared purpose of the Union" was "to defend itself." Fort Sumter belonged to the national government, and its men had reached a point where they must either desert their place of duty or face starvation. On March 5, President Lincoln received word from Major Anderson that there were only provisions enough to last a week, and that unless help came soon the fort must be abandoned. What was President Lincoln to do? Should he send food to Anderson and his men? Or must the flag be hauled down?

Lincoln determined to find out if possible just what the feeling of the people of South Carolina was, and whether they would plunge the country into war rather than allow the handful of Union soldiers in Charleston Harbor to be fed. The President's former law partner, Ward H. Lamon, a Virginian by birth, offered to go to Charleston and see what the people there were likely to do if the President should make good his inaugural pledge of holding all "places belonging to the govern-

ment." It was a dangerous journey. Secretary Seward tried to prevent it, insisting that Lamon could not come back alive; and yet it was of the utmost importance to know the whole situation at once. Lamon was eager to go, and the President said, "By Jing! I'll risk him. Go, Lamon, and God bless you! Bring back a palmetto if you can't bring good news." Lamon went. He soon learned the temper of the South, and reported to the President all that he had discovered. Lincoln then put to each member of the cabinet this question: "Assuming it to be possible to now provision Fort Sumter, under all the circumstances is it wise to attempt it?" General Scott, the commander of the army, had already advised against it, and now all but one of the President's cabinet were agreeing with General Scott. In the face of this, the President determined to hold the fort. A vessel was made ready and sent to Charleston, and, according to promise, Governor Pickens was notified.

Before the vessel containing food for the besieged men reached the harbor, General Beauregard ordered an attack on the little fort. For two days Major Anderson and his half-starved men kept up a brave but hopeless defense. At last the flag, torn by hostile bullets, was lowered. The little garrison, holding out as long as it could without food or ammunition, surrendered. A new and strange banner was raised over Sumter. "And the war came."

On Sunday morning, April 14, 1861, the news flashed to every village in the land, "Sumter has been fired on. Sumter has fallen." From that moment the flag of the Union, that had been only a decoration, became a sacred thing, that brought tears to men's eyes as they saw it outlined against the sky.

The next morning the President issued a proclamation calling for seventy-five thousand troops and convening a special session of Congress to meet on July 4. In this proclamation he said: "I appeal to all loyal citizens to . . . aid this effort to maintain the honor, the integrity, and the existence of our 'National Union' and the perpetuity of popular government, and to redress wrongs already long enough endured." Many loyal men of the country responded instantly. Within a week, camps were established and men and boys from every station in life were taking their first lessons in military science and getting ready to fight for the flag. The streets in every city echoed the tramp of marching men, and every wind carried to anxious ears the rattle of the drum and the scream of the bugle. And so was created the volunteer army which, before peace came again, numbered nearly three millions of men.

The war, long threatened, had begun; and of the army of the Union, soon to become the greatest army that the world ever knew, Abraham Lincoln, whose military training had been confined to an eight weeks' campaign against Indians that he never saw, became the commander-in-chief.

The news that Fort Sumter had fallen put an end at once to party differences in the North. Democrats and Republicans forgot politics and became Union men. Stephen A. Douglas, Senator from Illinois, and both in Congress and among the people the leader of the Democratic party, hurried to the White House to offer his help to President Lincoln in putting down the rebellion. It was the one thing that the President needed most. Lincoln and Douglas, rivals no longer but loyal friends, spent three hours together on that fateful Sunday evening planning to save the Union.

Senator Douglas gave to the newspapers as soon as he left the White House the information that "Mr. Douglas called on the President this evening and had an interesting conversation on the present condition of the country. The substance of the conversation was that . . . Mr. Douglas . . . was prepared to sustain the President in the exercise of all his constitutional functions to preserve the Union, and maintain the government, and defend the federal capital." From that meeting, the last that ever took place between the two friends, Douglas went to Illinois to rally the people of that State, and especially the Democrats, to Lincoln's support. To the legislature on April 25, 1861, he made his last great public address, for he died a few weeks later. "Whenever our government is assailed," he declared, "the shortest way to peace is the most stupendous preparation for war." He closed by saying: "It is with a sad heart, with a grief that I have never before experienced, that I have to contemplate this fearful struggle; but I believe, in my conscience, that it is a duty we owe to ourselves, our children, and our God, to protect this government and that flag from every assailant, be he who he may."

It was the last message of a great man. Its effect was instantaneous. Not only in Illinois, but throughout the North, the men of the nation gave evidence to their President that they would stand by him and defend the Union until the flag should float in peace over every foot of soil.

## CHAPTER XV

### A PEOPLE'S SORROW

THE attack on Fort Sumter was a call to arms, South as well as North. The chief difference was that it found the South ready, while it took the North by surprise. Southern orators charged that in sending bread to Sumter, Lincoln had "invaded sacred soil" and was trying to "coerce" a sovereign State. On April 17, Virginia, by the vote of a bare majority, joined the Confederacy; and in May Tennessee, also by a close vote, and Arkansas and North Carolina followed. The Confederate States of America, eleven in number, with Jefferson Davis of Mississippi as President, and Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia as Vice-President, had organized what they dreamed would become a new republic, with the right to buy and sell and hold human beings as slaves under national protection as its chief principle of government, and the fear of losing that right through Lincoln's election its only reason for being.

The Confederate leaders had hoped to unite all the slave States, but they were doomed to disappointment. Maryland and Kentucky and Missouri remained loyal, although among their citizens many showed their sympathy with the South by enlisting and marching with "the boys in gray." To keep these border States loyal was Lincoln's constant purpose, while many were the efforts to break them away from his firm yet sympathetic hold.

The different States, in proportion to their popula-



tion, began at once to organize their soldiers into regiments and put them under the command of the President, to be trained for war. To the city of Washington, defenseless on the Virginia border, the first troops hastened, reaching the capital four days after the President's call went forth. The city was practically in a state of siege. Barricades of all kinds had been put up about the public buildings. Famine was threatening, and the people were in terror lest a few of the Southern regiments, already in camp and awaiting marching orders, should move against the city. Waiting through the weary night for the Massachusetts and New York regiments to reach Washington, Lincoln walked the corridors of the White House alone, repeating to himself the despairing cry, "Why don't they come? Why don't they come?"

The conduct of the war presented many problems to the President and his military advisers. The Confederate coast-line from the Potomac to the Mexican border, many thousands of miles long, was blockaded, and had to be watched to prevent the South from getting provisions or arms or relief from abroad. The border-line of Virginia and Tennessee and Arkansas must be guarded lest injury be done to the Northern cities, particularly Washington and Baltimore and Philadelphia. The Mississippi River, with the Ohio opening the way into the great Middle West, must be patrolled by war-boats and guarded by forts and military camps. With the same vigilance must they watch the Potomac on the east and the Cumberland and the Tennessee rivers on the west. At all hazards Washington, the national capital, must be kept in safety.

Three general fields of military activity seemed to open: the capture of Richmond, the new Confederate

capital; the establishment, through the army, of the federal authority among the loyal Union people of eastern Tennessee by way of the Tennessee River; and the capture of the Confederate fortifications along the Mississippi, so as to open the "Father of Waters" to free passage by Union vessels. To carry out this plan of warfare required the building-up and training of a larger army than the world had yet known. It required four years in camp and on the march, on the battlefield, in attack, and on retreat, until the South, whose troops were fewer and whose wealth was less, should at last be worn out and cry, "Enough."

The story of the four years of waiting and fighting cannot be told here. Lincoln, as commander-in-chief of army and navy and President of the United States, had it all to oversee and direct. The sorrows it brought were his sorrows, and its hourly cares and anxieties were his.

One member of the little party that had traveled with Lincoln from Springfield to Washington was young Elmer Ellsworth, who, when the war broke out, was made colonel of a regiment of zouaves. While passing through Alexandria, Virginia, with his regiment, Colonel Ellsworth saw a Confederate flag floating from the roof of a hotel. He dashed up the stairs and, tearing the flag from its staff, started back to the street. On the stairway he was shot and killed. The reckless courage he had shown and the cruelty of his untimely death made the men of the North still more eager to fight for the flag for whose honor Colonel Ellsworth had died.

When the President was aroused in the early dawn and told the news, he stood by the window in silence looking across the Potomac toward Alexandria, while

the tears streamed down his face. Turning toward the bearers of the heart-breaking tidings he said slowly : " So this is the beginning — murder ! Ah, my friends, what shall the end be ? " On the next day, in the midst of his overwhelming labors, he found time to write with his own hand this letter to the father and mother whose boy had been killed : —

May 25, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR AND MADAM, — In the untimely loss of your noble son, our affliction here is scarcely less than your own. So much of promised usefulness to one's country, and of bright hopes for one's self and friends, have rarely been so suddenly dashed as in his fall. In size, in years, and in youthful appearance a boy only, his power to command men was surpassingly great. This power, combined with a fine intellect, an indomitable energy, and a taste altogether military, constituted in him, as seemed to me, the best natural talent in that department I ever knew.

And yet he was singularly modest and deferential in social intercourse. My acquaintance with him began less than two years ago ; yet through the latter half of the intervening period it was as intimate as the disparity of our ages and my engrossing engagements would permit. To me he appeared to have no indulgences or pastimes ; and I never heard him utter a profane or an intemperate word. What was conclusive of his good heart, he never forgot his parents. The honors he labored for so laudably, and for which in the sad end he so gallantly gave his life, he meant for them no less than for himself.

In the hope that it may be no intrusion upon the sacredness of your sorrow, I have ventured to address you this tribute to the memory of my young friend and your brave and early fallen child.

May God give you that consolation which is beyond all earthly power.

Sincerely your friend in a common affliction,

A. LINCOLN.

This was the first of a great number of personal griefs that the war brought upon Lincoln. A few months later, Colonel Edward D. Baker, the friend who had introduced him at the inauguration, was killed in battle at Ball's Bluff. As there came to the President from day to day the news of defeat and disaster on many battlefields, it found him overborne by the sorrow of the people and bearing the suffering of others upon a heart already heavy with its own grief. When the report of a battle was looked for, he would wait all through the night for news of the outcome, or hurry through the darkness to the telegraph-office in the War Department Building to learn the news and talk it over with his advisers. To him the report of a battle was the story of so many of his own people, his friends, who were suffering in his service. When he heard of a soldier's death, he thought first of what that death meant at home, and in every way he could, he tried to make the sorrow of it easier to bear.

Most of the soldiers who fought for the Union were mere boys. Many of their colonels and generals were less than thirty years old. In the heart of the President they were his boys in blue, whom he loved as he loved his own Robert and Willie and Tad; and in their hearts he was the "Father Abraham" for whom they prayed, and to whom they sang their rallying song, "We are coming, Father Abraham."

He went to the hospitals so often to cheer the wounded that the high officials thought he was neglecting the business of his office. A story is told of his stopping beside a young soldier's death-bed to write a last letter to the father and mother of the boy. At the foot of the brave little note he added as a sort of comfort to the sufferer, "This letter was written by

Abraham Lincoln," and as he turned to leave, asked if he could do anything more. The boy reached a trembling hand toward him and said: "I won't live over an hour or two. Can't you hold my hand until it's all over?"

When the army was in camp in northern Virginia, he found comfort in visiting the boys and watching them drill, and when in the fortune of war they came to the Washington hospitals, wasted with disease or broken with wounds, he visited them there and brought them the comfort of a father's gentle touch and cheering word.

He wrote many letters of sympathy to friends and sometimes to strangers to whom the war had brought some personal loss. In one of these letters he said to the daughter of a friend who had died: —

DEAR FANNY, — In this sad world of ours sorrow comes to all, and to the young it comes with bittered agony because it takes them unawares. The older have learned ever to expect it. . . . You cannot now realize that you will ever feel better. Is not this so? And yet it is a mistake. You are sure to be happy again. To know this, which is certainly true, will make you some less miserable now. I have had experience enough to know what I say, and you need only to believe it to feel better at once. The memory of your dear father, instead of an agony, will yet be a sad, sweet feeling in your heart, of a purer and holier sort than you have known before.

Your sincere friend,

A. LINCOLN.

To a mother whose five sons had died for their country he wrote this letter: —

DEAR MADAM, — I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have

died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

When, after a year of the horrors of war, death entered his own household and took his eight-year-old boy Willie, his nature changed greatly. The lines of care deepened about his eyes and mouth. In a few months he had grown to be an old man. He slept scarcely at all. Those who saw him from day to day said that his was the saddest face they had ever seen. To one of his associates he once said, "I shall never be happy again."

## CHAPTER XVI

### PRESIDENT LINCOLN AT HOME

IT would be a mistake to believe that President Lincoln allowed sorrow to overwhelm him. He had learned through long experience to meet it with a smiling face. There were times when no one else dared to be either hopeful or happy. His stories and his jokes were the despair of his counselors. "Why can't the President be serious?" they exclaimed in their impatience. Because he interrupted a council of state to tell a story or read a page that he thought funny from "Artemus Ward, His Book," shallow men called him heartless. "I tell you," he said, "I simply must do it. If I could not laugh, I should die. It is my safety-valve."

Life in the White House had little privacy. During the first three years the conduct of the war was directed from there. In the White House the cabinet held its meetings, to agree, and quite as often to disagree, over what should be done. To the White House came letters and telegrams by the thousand, from people in distress, from applicants for office, from politicians, inventors, abolitionists, and "cranks." Men came with schemes for ending the war or for enriching themselves. Those with grievances sought the President for redress. Favors and privileges of all sorts were demanded. But most of all, and at all hours of the day and night, came appeals for the pardon of unhappy soldiers condemned to death for sleeping on duty or for running away from military service. The President had given strict orders

to turn no one back who came with appeals for a soldier's life; and against the protest of the head of the army he granted innumerable prayers of this sort, giving as his excuse, "I believe this boy can serve his country better living than dead."

Most of the demands upon him were unnecessary, for people in difficulty naturally turned to him as the only person who would hear them. One instance is told of a Kentuckian who demanded the President's help to reclaim a runaway slave. With such a request at such a time Lincoln had no patience. "You remind me," he exclaimed, "of a small boy on a St. Lawrence steamer. Just as they were in the midst of the rapids at the most dangerous point, the boy rushed to the pilot and said, 'Say, Mr. Captain, I wish you would stop this boat; I've lost my apple overboard.'"

The President was very fond of John Hay, his young secretary, who lived in the White House, and who saved him from many an unpleasant meeting, and from many a wearing duty. In the long sleepless nights the President was wont to court rest from his anxieties by going across the White House in his night-clothes to sit on the edge of John Hay's bed and read to him for hours at a time from Shakespeare's plays or from the poems of Holmes and Hood and Burns.

The Lincoln boys, eight and ten years old, went wherever they liked about the building, bursting into the cabinet-room while affairs of vast importance were under discussion, and climbing over their good-natured father's giant frame as if it were their play-hour and the austere Secretary of War and his fellow statesmen were intruders. Mr. Hay has told of the comradeship that prevailed between Lincoln and his two younger



sons. "The two little boys, with their Western independence and enterprise, kept the house in an uproar. They drove their tutor wild with their good-natured disobedience: they organized a minstrel show in the attic; they made acquaintance with the office-seekers, and became the hot champions of the distressed. Tad was a merry, warm-blooded, kindly little boy, perfectly lawless, and full of odd fancies. . . . Sometimes, escaping from the domestic authorities, he would take refuge in that sanctuary [his father's office] for the whole evening, dropping to sleep at last on the floor, when the President would pick him up and carry him tenderly to bed."

Once, when hope of success for the Union cause seemed far away, the President issued a proclamation setting apart a day of fasting and prayer, and asking "all the people to abstain on that day from their ordinary secular pursuits and to unite, at their several places of worship and their respective homes, in keeping the day holy to the Lord." When little Tad Lincoln was told that this meant going without food for a whole day, he began to be afraid that he might starve. For some days before the fast-day, and with the utmost secrecy, he busied himself with hiding in the carriage-house scraps of food from the table and the kitchen. The discovery of his storehouse of provisions enraged the small boy, but amused his father greatly. "If he grows to be a man," the President said with a laugh, "Tad will be what the women all dote on — a good provider."

One of the President's secretaries has described the part Tad took in one of his father's White House speeches. "From a point of concealment behind the window drapery, I held a light while he read, drop-

ping the pages of his written speech, one by one, upon the floor as he finished them. Little Tad . . . scrambled around on the floor, importuning his father to give him 'another paper,' as he collected the sheets of paper fluttering from the President's hand. Outside was a vast sea of faces, illuminated by the lights that burned in the festal array of the White House, and stretching far out into the misty darkness."

On another occasion, when Secretary Stanton playfully made Tad a lieutenant in the army, Tad threw the White House into an uproar by assuming full military authority. He had a lot of firearms sent over, discharged the guard, mustered all the house-servants, drilled them with the muskets, and put them on guard. When the confusion he had created was reported to President Lincoln, he treated it as a joke, sent Tad to bed, and then relieved the novel guardsmen from duty.

The Lincoln children's dogs and cats and goats seemed to get their share of the busy President's thoughts. When there were new puppies or kittens in the family, he announced it in all seriousness to his visitors. When Tad was away with his mother, telegrams kept the boy posted as to the welfare of his pets. In one of these dispatches the President said, "Tell Tad the goats and father are very well, especially the goats." In one of his letters to Mrs. Lincoln he wrote: "Tell dear Tad poor 'Nanny goat' is lost and Mrs. Cuthbert and I are in distress about it. The day you left, Nanny was found resting herself and chewing her little cud on the middle of Tad's bed; but now she's gone. The gardener kept complaining that she destroyed the flowers, till it was concluded to bring her down to the White House. . . . The second



LINCOLN AND TAD



day she disappeared and has not been heard of since. This is the last we know of poor Nanny." In a later dispatch he telegraphed his wife, "All well, including Tad's pony and the goats."

Once in a while the boys would succeed in enticing their father into the grounds, where they would play ball with him, and in high glee keep him running the bases with his giant strides. For the children he was willing to do anything.

A boy of thirteen had displayed unusual courage in the gunboat service and sought the President's help in getting into the Naval Academy. He bowed to the President and began to tell his story when he was interrupted by Mr. Lincoln's hearty, "Bless me! is that the boy who did so gallantly in those two great battles? Why, I feel that I should bow to him and not he to me." When the President found the boy was a few months too young to have his wish, he put his hand affectionately on his shoulder and said to him: "Now, my boy, go home and have good fun until fall. It is about the last holiday you will get."

Another boy of thirteen had been a drummer and had lost his place because he had offended his colonel. Sick and disheartened, he was waiting to see if the President would not give him another chance. Lincoln asked him where he lived and who his parents were. "I have no mother, no father, no brothers, no sisters, and no friends — nobody cares for me." The President wrote on a card an order "to care for this poor boy," and sent him away happy.

Through all the years, with the wisdom and foresight of a statesman, he had kept the childlike spirit. The little children, who knew nothing of his trials, came to

him for help and comfort as freely as if he belonged to them.

In the crowds that hung about the doorway of his private office the woman who brought a baby with her always managed to get a hearing. The little folk who attended his receptions he singled out for some special word of kindness, stopping the rapidly moving procession until he could take a baby into his arms, or "shake hands with this little man." A boy of seven, who was brought to the White House and introduced to Mr. Lincoln as the son of one of the great Union generals, remembers with what tenderness the tall President laid a tired hand on his head as he said: "My boy, I hope you will live to be as good a man as I know your father is."

At one of the big receptions three timid little girls followed the long line of visitors to where Mr. Lincoln stood, and then suddenly lost their courage. The President noticed them and called out, "Little girls, are you going to pass me without shaking hands?"

To one of the youngsters at Springfield whose statement that he had talked to Abraham Lincoln had been disputed, the President found time to write:—

EXECUTIVE MANSION, March 19, 1861.

Whom it may concern: I did see and talk with George Evans Patten, last May, at Springfield, Illinois.

Respectfully,

A. LINCOLN.

This interest in the happiness of children Abraham Lincoln had always shown. He did not hesitate to sacrifice the dignity of his high place and the comfort and convenience of a very busy man to give pleasure to any child that needed him.

In the old days, when Lincoln was one of the leading lawyers of the State, he noticed a little girl of ten who stood beside a trunk in front of her home crying bitterly. He stopped to learn what was wrong, and was told that she was about to miss a long-promised visit to Decatur because the wagon had not come for her. "You need n't let that trouble you," was his cheering reply. "Just come along with me and we shall make it all right." Lifting the trunk upon his shoulder, and taking the little girl by the hand, he went through the streets of Springfield a half-mile to the railway station, put her and her trunk on the train, and sent her away with a happiness in her heart that is still there.

George Pickett, who had known Lincoln in Illinois, years before, joined the Southern army and by his conspicuous bravery and ability had become one of the great generals of the Confederacy. Toward the close of the war, when a large part of Virginia had fallen into the possession of the Union army, the President called at General Pickett's Virginia home. The general's wife, with her baby on her arm, met him at the door. She herself has told the story for us. "'Is this George Pickett's home?' he asked. With all the courage and dignity I could muster I replied, 'Yes, and I am his wife and this is his baby.' 'I am Abraham Lincoln.' 'The President!' I gasped. I had never seen him, but I knew the intense love and reverence with which my soldier always spoke of him. The stranger shook his head and replied, 'No; Abraham Lincoln, George's old friend.' The baby pushed away from me and reached out his hands to Mr. Lincoln, who took him in his arms. As he did so an expression of rapt, almost divine tenderness and love

lighted up the sad face. It was a look that I have never seen on any other face. The baby opened his mouth wide and insisted upon giving his father's friend a dewy kiss. As Mr. Lincoln gave the little one back to me he said, 'Tell your father, the rascal, that I forgive him for the sake of your bright eyes.'"



## CHAPTER XVII

### HIGH TIDE

IN the earlier years of Lincoln's life he believed that fate directed the affairs of men and determined their success or failure for them. But as he grew older, he came to feel that Providence had intrusted to him a great duty toward mankind, and that in some way, thus far undiscovered, he was to have a part in bringing freedom to the slaves. In the campaigns with Douglas, ambitious though he was, he found himself less interested in his own personal success than he was in bringing the people to see the wickedness of slavery. When he came to the presidency it was with a feeling that it was God who had put upon him the burden of saving the Union, and that the efforts of men and, least of all, his own efforts, had little to do with the results. To his mind the contest with slavery, and, later on, the war to save the Union, were a single death-struggle between right and wrong, in which he was chosen to execute God's will in God's own good time. It was for this reason that he gave no thought to his own safety, traveling unprotected except when Secretary Stanton forced a guard upon him, and when he made his visits to the front, walking unconcernedly within easy range of the Confederate guns. It was his faith that God would use him as long as he was needed, and would let him die whenever his work was finished.

This attitude toward Providence he wrote down, in the fall of 1862, when there seemed to be no hope that war would come to an early end: "The will of God

prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present Civil War it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party; and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect his purpose. I am almost ready to say that this is probably true; that God wills this contest and wills that it shall not end yet. By His mere great power on the minds of the now contestants He could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And, having begun, He could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds."

During 1861 and 1862 the loyal States stood by him faithfully, sending troops by hundreds of thousands as rapidly as he called for them. Upon the question of freeing the slaves they continued to disagree. The war was a war to preserve the Union; upon that all could stand together, Kentucky and Maryland and Missouri, as well as the free States of the North. But in the background the problem of what to do with the slaves loomed large. Hundreds of thousands of negroes in the South were helping the enemies of the Union, supporting the families of the soldiers in rebellion while their masters fought, and digging the trenches and building the fortifications to enable their masters to prolong the war. The time was rapidly approaching when this use of the slaves must be stopped. If only the President would set them free, men said, the end would soon come. But emancipation could not come so long as it would offend the loyal border States. Day by day the anti-slavery feeling grew stronger in the

North, and day after day abolition committees and delegations waited on the President to urge him to act. At the same time other loyal people just as earnestly warned him of the mischief that such a step would work.

The President found a strong reason for emancipation in the effect it would have upon the feeling of England, for with all their sympathy with the South, the English were distinctly hostile to slavery. Lincoln knew that if ever the success of the South came to mean the perpetuation of slavery, English sympathy would shift toward the Union side.

During the summer of 1862, it became plain that emancipation could not be put off much longer. The military necessity of taking from the enemy the power to use negro labor in aid of the rebellion became more and more evident, even to the loyal people on the border. Lincoln, having made up his mind to free the slaves, kept his own counsel, waiting for the fit time to come, and bearing in silence the criticism of the anti-slavery people.

To Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, who, under the title, "The Prayer of Twenty Millions," had printed a savage attack on him for delaying to free the slaves, he wrote: "I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. . . . If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. . . . I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free."

This is the answer he made to a committee of church people who came to him to urge him to act: "I am approached with the most opposite opinions and advice, and that by religious men who are equally certain that they represent the divine will. . . . I hope it will not be irreverent for me to say that if it is probable that God would reveal His will to others on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed He would reveal it directly to me; for, unless I am more deceived in myself than I often am, it is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. And if I can learn what it is, I will do it."

Meanwhile he had made his decision. He went into the cabinet meeting one July afternoon with a volume of Artemus Ward in his hand and commenced the deliberations by reading aloud a page of flippant nonsense that angered Secretary Stanton and seemed to the rest to be inexcusably out of place. Becoming suddenly serious, he said: "When the rebel army was at Frederick, I determined as soon as it should be driven out of Maryland to issue a proclamation of emancipation. I said nothing to any one: but I made the promise to myself, and" — hesitating for a moment — "to my Maker. The rebel army is now driven out and I am going to fulfill that promise."

In September there came a Union victory in the battle of Antietam, and at once the Emancipation Proclamation was published, giving freedom to all who should be slaves within the enemy's country on January 1, 1863. The proclamation closed with this prayer: "And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God."



LINCOLN WITH HIS GENERALS AT ANTIETAM

(From a photograph taken just after the battle. General McClellan is facing Lincoln)



No sooner were the slaves in the Confederate States set free than it became necessary to organize negro regiments. Many in the North who had been slow to approve of emancipation opposed the arming of the black men. The feeling against it ran high in the North, while in the South, President Davis and the Confederate Congress threatened the officers of negro regiments with death. To a Union mass meeting, held at Springfield, Illinois, in August, 1863, the President sent a letter in which he explained the necessity for freeing the slaves and employing them as soldiers. "Peace," he wrote, "does not appear so distant as it did. I hope it will come soon, and come to stay; and so come as to be worth the keeping in all future time. It will then have been proved that among freemen there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet, and that they who take such appeal are sure to lose their case and pay the cost. And then there will be some black men who can remember that with silent tongue, and clenched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation, while I fear there will be some white ones unable to forget that with malignant heart and deceitful speech they strove to hinder it."

On July 4, 1863, the tide of war began to turn. The Union armies under General Grant, with the help of Farragut and Porter and their boats, captured Vicksburg and opened the Mississippi, separating Louisiana and Arkansas and Texas from the Confederacy, and Lincoln announced, "The Father of Waters again goes unvexed to the sea." On the same day, at Gettysburg, in southern Pennsylvania, General Lee and his army, who had marched into the North, were turned back toward Richmond. The

free States never again echoed the tread of hostile armies.

At the battle of Gettysburg, which lasted for three days, there had been killed, wounded, or missing over forty-three thousand men, the Union losses being greater than the Confederate. The battle-ground where the soldiers had been buried, almost as they fell, was set apart at once as a national cemetery. On November 19, 1863, the dedication took place. Edward Everett delivered the oration. To Abraham Lincoln an invitation had been given to "set apart these grounds to their sacred use by a few appropriate remarks." The President came by train the day before. The speech was half written, and in his bedroom at Gettysburg he wrote the rest in pencil. A hundred thousand people had assembled in the cemetery, toward which in the morning the great procession moved slowly forward. Lincoln rode his horse with a dignity befitting the commander-in-chief of the nation's army. Mr. Everett's address held the audience profoundly attentive from noon until two o'clock. A hymn was then sung whose spirit is expressed in the final stanza:—

"We trust, O God, Thy gracious power  
To aid us in our darkest hour.  
This be our prayer, — Father, save  
A people's freedom from its grave.  
All praise to Thee !"

As the last words of the hymn, sung by a Baltimore chorus of a hundred voices, died away, Lincoln stepped forth with the sheets containing the little speech in his left hand. He spoke slowly, in a voice that, like the notes of a bugle, reached the farthest borders of the crowd. There was tenderness in the words: "The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have conse-



crated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." As he continued, "It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced," it was plain that the people to whose loyalty he had always trusted would prove faithful to the cause for which the honored dead had given "the last full measure of devotion."

The next summer peace seemed farther away than ever. The battle-line crept once more dangerously near to free territory. Impatient men, weary of Lincoln's caution, began to look about for some one for President who would drive the armies unprepared to their destruction, while others, weary of the daily record of disaster, were in search of a candidate who would consent to a peace that meant disunion.

A mass convention of all the dissatisfied Union men was held at Cleveland, Ohio, to denounce the President's "imbecile policy in the conduct of the war," and nominate John C. Frémont to succeed him. Instead of being a representative gathering of thousands of loyal citizens, it brought together only a few disappointed politicians and personal enemies of Mr. Lincoln. To the President came a report of the affair as he sat with a group of friends at the White House. "How many people were at the meeting?" he asked. "About four hundred," was the answer. He reached for the Bible that lay on his desk, and, turning to the first book of Samuel and the twenty-second chapter, read aloud: "And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he be-

came a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men."

The Republicans made no nomination in 1864, but the Union party, as it called itself, met at Baltimore and nominated Abraham Lincoln for President and Andrew Johnson of Tennessee for Vice-President. Many of the Democrats supported the Union ticket. The others nominated George B. McClellan for President.

In the fall, as the campaign went on, the Union began to win victories by sea and by land. Admiral Farragut captured Mobile, and Sherman took Atlanta. The effect on the campaign was stimulating. To use Lincoln's homely words, the people became convinced that "it would not do to swap horses while they were crossing the stream," and by a tremendous vote — 212 to 21 — reëlected Abraham Lincoln. He was serenaded, the night after the election, and in his reponse said: "The rebellion continues, and now that the election is over, may not all having a common interest reunite in a common effort to save our common country? For my own part, I have striven and shall strive to avoid placing any obstacle in the way. So long as I have been here I have not willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom. While I am deeply sensible to the high compliment of a reëlection, and duly grateful, as I trust, to Almighty God for having directed my countrymen to a right conclusion, as I think, for their own good, it adds nothing to my satisfaction that any other man may be disappointed or pained by the result."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### PEACE

THE reëlection of Lincoln proved that the only way to peace, to a peace that would "come to stay" and be "worth the keeping in all future time," was to fight it out. To the Confederate army it gave the courage of despair, a courage that enabled brave men to die for a cause already lost; to the Union soldiers it gave a confidence that made success secure. It was plain that the armies under Lee in Virginia and under Johnston in the Carolinas were struggling to put off the inevitable end. The opening of the Mississippi River, in 1863, had cut the South in two and put the Western States out of the contest. From the Tennessee River, General Sherman had fought his bloody way into the heart of Georgia and was now leading his victorious army "from Atlanta to the sea," thus separating the Gulf States from what was left of the Confederacy. Meanwhile Grant was driving Lee, inch by inch, by "the road of death," back from the Potomac and into the devastated South. The Confederacy was at bay. The end was in sight.

On March 4, 1865, standing where, four years before, he had sworn "to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution," President Lincoln was inaugurated a second time. The four years of war had wrought great changes in the people and in the man. No military escort was needed this time to bring him to the Capitol, for he was now among friends. With little Tad beside him, he drove rapidly from the White House

to the ceremony. In the parade and in the audience, for the first time in American history, a multitude of negroes, soldiers and civilians whom he had set free, were gathered to do him honor. The President, haggard and worn, stood before the people. He was saddened by his own cares and borne down by the burden of the nation's grief. He might have said, as Henry Ward Beecher did, "I am surrounded by those who are sorrowing almost unto death."

As he arose, a deep silence fell upon the people. It was as if a prophet of the elder day were speaking the word of inspiration to the nation that his faith had saved. The sky had been overcast, but suddenly a burst of sunshine brought the giant figure into a glare of light, thrilling the speaker and giving to the people, as he thought, an omen of the triumph that was so near at hand.

"The Almighty has his own purposes," he declared. "'Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.' If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribed to Him? Fondly do we hope — fervently do we pray — that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn

with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan — to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

The change that the years of war had made in the President was noted by every one. "When I last saw him," Horace Greeley tells us, "I was struck by his haggard, care-fraught face, so different from the sunny, gladsome countenance he first brought from Illinois. I felt that his life hung by so slender a thread that any new access of trouble or excess of effort might suddenly close his career. . . . 'The sunset of life' was plainly looking out of his kindly eyes and gleaming from his weather-beaten visage."

The weeks that followed brought no little happiness to the President. The Thirteenth Amendment passed Congress and was in a fair way to become a part of the Constitution. By it liberty was given to the slaves in the loyal States, as, by the President's Emancipation Proclamation, liberty had already been given to the slaves within Confederate territory. The President took every opportunity to help in the adoption of this amendment.

Late in March he took Tad with him to City Point in Virginia, where, as General Grant's guest, he could watch the movement of the armies. The last days of

the struggle were no holiday for the tender-hearted President. As the news came, from hour to hour, of Lee's retreat and of the capture of Confederate prisoners by thousands, he sent messages of joy to Washington, while the reports of men wounded and men killed on either side deepened the lines of sadness in his face. He knew that, as in surgery, the most merciful way to peace was to bring it quickly by sharp and decisive action. So when General Sheridan reported that, if the thing were pressed, he thought General Lee would surrender, he set himself grimly to the inevitable and telegraphed to Grant, "Let the thing be pressed."

During the President's stay at City Point, Jefferson Davis and the Confederate officials gathered their papers together, left Richmond by night, and sought safety farther south. As they left, followed by all who were able to crowd into the railway coaches, some one set fire to the city, making the place even more desolate than war had made it. Lee had only a few more days to fight and the end was at hand.

Without military protection Lincoln led little Tad by the hand into the abandoned capital of the dying Confederacy. No triumphal entry like this is told in history. The negroes, free at last by his hand and by the ratification of war, crowded about him as he walked through their midst. Many proclaimed him "the great Messiah," and falling to the ground before him, tried to kiss his feet. It was a strange experience to this simple-minded man. "Don't kneel to me," he said. "That is not right. You must kneel to God only, and thank Him for the liberty you will hereafter enjoy." But from their tender gratitude he was unable to escape. Barefooted, in the garb of slavery, they pursued him eagerly, singing hymns of worship in which

"Massa Lincoln" bore quite as great a part as did the Lord of Hosts. Finally, he made them a speech: "My poor friends, you are free — free as air. Liberty is your birthright. But you must try to deserve it. . . . Learn the laws and obey them; obey God's commandments and thank Him for giving you liberty, for to Him you owe all things."

An accident to Secretary Seward called Lincoln to Washington earlier than he had wished. On Saturday, the 8th of April, he left City Point by boat, by way of the Potomac, for Washington. Confident that within a few hours the surrender of General Lee would bring the peace for which he had so long prayed, he was able for a time to forget the cares of state as he read aloud from the tragedy of Macbeth.

Many were now beginning to abandon the Confederate cause. In Richmond, during the President's brief stay, a movement had been started, with his help, for the withdrawal of the Virginia troops from the Confederate army and the repeal of Virginia's ordinance of secession. But it came to nothing.

The prospect of an immediate end to the war brought the President and Congress face to face with the gravest political questions the country has ever had to solve. How should the Union be restored? Should Jefferson Davis and his associates be arrested and punished for treason, or should they be received into citizenship, to take part again in the administration of a government they had sought to destroy? Should the policy toward the leaders in the rebellion be one of revenge, of punishment, or of pardon? Northern sentiment was divided. In the bitterness of spirit to which the war and its losses had given birth, many found it hard to forgive the men who, by the attack on Fort Sumter, had plunged

the country into war. Many, too, found fault with President Lincoln because he felt that the South had suffered enough, and that the victors in the awful struggle should yield to the command of Scripture, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Some of the bitter partisans in the North, including Vice-President Andrew Johnson, were opposing any settlement with the defeated Confederates which would permit the pardon of their leaders and the restoration to the States of their political rights as a part of the restored Union. The President was not one of these. For the prostrate South he had no word of bitterness. He was a stranger to hate.

As he had exposed himself day after day to dangers of all sorts, the fear for his safety increased. When he was approaching Washington Mrs. Lincoln said to him, "The city is filled with our enemies." But Lincoln exclaimed, "Enemies! We must never speak of that!" The President was a constant visitor to the hospitals where the wounded from both armies were being cared for by the women of the North. On one of these visits an attendant tried to turn him aside by saying, "Those patients are rebels." But he answered gently, "Not rebels, — Confederates."

Peace came at last. On Sunday, the 9th of April, General Lee surrendered at Appomattox, and with the help of Grant, whose generosity in victory had won the admiration of the South, and of Lincoln, whose sympathy for the South in its distress had won the hearts of many of his former enemies, he was now ready to "bind up the nation's wounds."

When the news from Appomattox reached Washington, the cabinet was in session at the White House. At Lincoln's bidding they all knelt in silent prayer.



Outside, men, women, and children thronged the public places. For the first time the voice of the cannon proclaimed good will to men. Bands played in all the streets. From Sunday until Friday the celebration continued. In the South, the boys in gray, no longer soldiers, were glad that with the return of peace they could go back to the hard work for which they were already eager and to the homes where, among those they loved, they could recount the story of their struggle to uphold a hopeless cause.

After the flight from Richmond, Jefferson Davis and his high officials had become fugitives. Advice was sought of President Lincoln regarding their capture and punishment. He did not seem interested. He merely told a story and suggested that if only it could be managed so that these persons could escape "unknownst" to him, it would save a lot of trouble.

In the White House grounds on Tuesday evening, by a common impulse, the happy crowds gathered, eager for a speech from the President. They loved to listen to him, and they wanted to hear what he would say about the South. As the war drew near its close, he had been seeking a plan that would secure forever the results of the war, freedom and union, and, at the same time, bring about the fulfillment of the hope he had expressed at his first inauguration, that "the mystic chords of memory stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave would yet swell the chorus of the Union." The time had indeed come to "bind up the nation's wounds." To Abraham Lincoln this meant above all else generosity toward a defeated enemy. He stood at the open window while he made plain to the crowd his plan for restoring the old relations between the States, upon terms that no enemy of the South would have

dreamed of offering. As the bands played patriotic airs, the President called for "Dixie," explaining to the people that the Attorney-General had looked into the question and had decided that "Dixie" was now a national air by right of conquest.

On Thursday night he had a strange dream that had come to him just before each of the great victories of the war. He dreamed that he was in a mysterious vessel, drifting silently, rapidly, toward an unknown shore. He told the dream to his cabinet ministers and to General Grant the next morning, assuring them as he told it that they would soon have news of the surrender of Johnston's army, the only remnant of the Confederate forces still in arms.

The arrival of General Grant at Washington aroused popular enthusiasm to its highest pitch, and brought thousands to the city to see the great commander for the first time. It was arranged and advertised that, on Friday evening, Grant was to go with the President and occupy a box at Ford's Theatre. The city was full of strangers, many of them still hostile to the Union. The intensity of the war feeling led the authorities to fear for the safety of Grant and Lincoln, if they should appear in public together. At the last moment Grant declined the invitation. The President did not want to go, but was loath to disappoint the people. With Mrs. Lincoln and two guests he entered the State Box at Ford's Theatre at about nine o'clock. For a moment the play was stopped. The audience rose to its feet, cheering and waving hats and handkerchiefs and flags, while the orchestra played "Hail to the Chief."

The evening wore on. The tired President, happy to forget his anxieties for an hour, became absorbed in

the play. Presently a young man slipped noiselessly into the President's box, held a pistol to Lincoln's head, and fired. An instant later, the assassin leaped to the stage and disappeared. All night long it rained dismally. The startled nation dumbly waited for the news that came in the early morning. In a forlorn little room into which he had been carried from the theatre, Abraham Lincoln lay dead.

In the camps of the Union armies and throughout the North on that Saturday morning, the joy that peace had brought was turned to grief. Every home in the North was widowed, and even the little children cried in their sorrow. It was as if one might say, as was said in the midnight of Egypt's sorrow, "There was not a house where there was not one dead."

Of a great ruler who gave up his life for his people, three centuries ago, it was said as we may say of Abraham Lincoln: "He went through life bearing the load of a people's sorrows upon his shoulders, with a smiling face. . . . While he lived he was the guiding star of a whole brave nation; and when he died the little children cried in the streets."

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### O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

O CAPTAIN! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is  
won,  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;  
But O heart! heart! heart!  
O the bleeding drops of red,  
Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain ! my Captain ! rise up and hear the bells ;  
Rise up — for you the flag is flung — for you the bugle trills,  
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths — for you the shores  
a-crowding,  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning ;  
Here Captain ! dear father !  
This arm beneath your head !  
It is some dream that on the deck  
You 've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,  
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,  
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won :  
Exult O shores, and ring O bells !  
But I with mournful tread,  
Walk the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

WALT WHITMAN.



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